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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
DECLINE AND FALL
OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

VOLUME THE NINTH.

A NEW EDITION.

BASIL:

PRINTED BY J. J. TOURNEISEN.

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M.D.CCC.LXXIX.

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tion of Charlemagne. — Restoration and Decay of
the Roman Empire in the West. — Independence of
Italy. — Constitution of the Germanic Body.*

IN the connection of the church and state, I have considered the former as subservient only, and relative, to the latter; a salutary maxim, if in fact, as well as in narrative, it had ever been held sacred. The oriental philosophy of the Gnostics, the dark abyss of predestination and

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XLIX.
Introduction
of images
into the
Christian
church.

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C H A P. XLIX. grace, and the strange transformation of the Eucharist from the sign to the substance of Christ's body*, I have purposely abandoned to the curiosity of speculative divines. But I have reviewed, with diligence and pleasure, the objects of ecclesiastical history, by which the decline and fall of the Roman empire were materially affected, the propagation of Christianity, the constitution of the Catholic church, the ruin of Paganism, and the sects that arose from the mysterious controversies concerning the Trinity and incarnation. At the head of this class, we may justly rank the worship of images, so fiercely disputed in the eighth and ninth centuries; since a question of popular superstition produced the revolt of Italy, the temporal power of the popes, and the restoration of the Roman empire in the West.

The primitive Christians were possessed with an unconquerable repugnance to the use and abuse of images; and this aversion may be ascribed to their descent from the Jews, and their enmity to the Greeks. The Mosaic law had severely proscribed all representations of the Deity; and that precept was firmly established in the principles and practice of the chosen people. The wit of the Christian apologists was pointed against the foolish idolaters, who bowed before the workmanship of their own hands; the images of brass and marble, which, had *they* been endowed with sense and motion, should have started rather from the pedestal to adore the creative powers

of the artist². Perhaps some recent and imperfect converts of the Gnostic tribe, might crown the statues of Christ and St. Paul with the profane honours which they paid to those of Aristotle and Pythagoras³; but the public religion of the Catholics was uniformly simple and spiritual; and the first notice of the use of pictures is in the censure of the council of Illiberis, three hundred years after the christian æra. Under the successors of Constantine, in the peace and luxury of the triumphant church, the more prudent bishops condescended to indulge a visible superstition, for the benefit of the multitude; and, after the ruin of Paganism, they were no longer restrained by the apprehension of an odious parallel. The first introduction of a symbolic worship was in the veneration of the cross, and of relics. The saints and martyrs, whose intercession was implored, were seated on the right-hand of God; but the gracious and often supernatural favours, which, in the popular belief, were showered round their tomb, conveyed an unquestionable sanction of the devout pilgrims, who visited, and touched, and kissed, these lifeless remains, the memorials of their merits and sufferings⁴. But a memorial, more interesting than the skull or the sandals of a departed worthy, is the faithful copy of his person and features, delineated by the arts of painting or sculpture. In every age, such copies, so congenial to human feelings, have been cherished by the zeal of private friendship, or public esteem: the images of the Roman emperors were adored

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C H A P. with civil, and almost religious honours; a reverence less ostentatious, but more sincere was applied to the statues of sages and patriots; and these profane virtues, these splendid sins, disappeared in the presence of the holy men, who had died for their celestial and everlasting country.

Their worship.

At first, the experiment was made with caution and scruple; and the venerable pictures were discreetly allowed to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the cold, and to gratify the prejudices of the heathen proselytes. By a slow though inevitable progression, the honours of the original were transferred to the copy: the devout Christian prayed before the image of a saint; and the Pagan rites of genuflexion, luminaries, and incense, again stole into the Catholic church. The scruples of reason, or piety, were silenced by the strong evidence of visions and miracles; and the pictures which speak, and move, and bleed must be endowed with a divine energy, and may be considered as the proper objects of religious adoration. The most audacious pencil might tremble in the rash attempt of defining, by forms and colours, the infinite Spirit, the eternal Father, who pervades and sustains the universe'. But the superstitious mind was more easily reconciled to paint and to worship the angels, and, above all, the Son of God, under the human shape, which, on earth, they have condescended to assume. The second person of the Trinity had been clothed with a real and mortal body; but that body had ascended into heaven; and, had

not some similitude been presented to the eyes of his disciples, the spiritual worship of Christ might have been obliterated by the visible relics and representations of the saints. A similar indulgence was requisite, and propitious, for the Virgin Mary: the place of her burial was unknown; and the assumption of her soul and body into heaven was adopted by the credulity of the Greeks and Latins. The use, and even the worship, of images, was firmly established before the end of the sixth century: they were fondly cherished by the warm imagination of the Greeks and Asiatics: the Pantheon and Vatican were adorned with the emblems of a new superstition; but this semblance of idololatry was more coldly entertained by the rude Barbarians and the Arian clergy of the West. The bolder forms of sculpture, in brass or marble, which peopled the temples of antiquity, were offensive to the fancy or conscience of the Christian Greeks; and a smooth surface of colours has ever been esteemed a more decent and harmless mode of imitation⁶.

The merit and effect of a copy depends on its resemblance with the original; but the primitive Christians were ignorant of the genuine features of the Son of God, his mother, and his apostles: the statue of Christ at Paneas in Palestine⁷ was more probably that of some temporal saviour; the Gnostics and their profane monuments were reprobated; and the fancy of the Christian artists could only be guided by the clandestine imitation of some heathen model. In this distress, a bold and

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The image
of Edeffa.

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dextrous invention assured at once the likeness of the image and the innocence of the worship. A new superstructure of fable was raised on the popular basis of a Syrian legend, on the correspondence of Christ and Abgarus, so famous in the days of Eusebius, so reluctantly deserted by our modern advocates. The bishop of Cæsarea 'records the epistle', but he most strangely forgets the picture, of Christ¹⁰; the perfect impression of his face on a linen, with which he gratified the faith of the royal stranger, who had invoked his healing power, and offered the strong city of Edessa to protect him against the malice of the Jews. The ignorance of the primitive church is explained by the long imprisonment of the image in a nich of the wall, from whence, after an oblivion of five hundred years, it was released by some prudent bishop, and seasonably presented to the devotion of the times. Its first and most glorious exploit was the deliverance of the city from the arms of Chosroes Nushirvan; and it was soon revered as a pledge of the divine promise, that Edessa should never be taken by a foreign enemy. It is true indeed, that the text of Procopius ascribes the double deliverance of Edessa to the wealth and valour of her citizens, who purchased the absence and repelled the assaults of the Persian monarch. He was ignorant, the profane historian, of the testimony which he is compelled to deliver in the ecclesiastical page of Evagrius, that the Palladium was exposed on the rampart, and that the water which had been

sprinkled on the holy face, instead of quenching, added new fuel to the flames of the besieged. After this important service, the image of Edessa was preserved with respect and gratitude; and if the Armenians rejected the legend, the more credulous Greeks adored the similitude, which was not the work of any mortal pencil, but the immediate creation of the divine original. The style and sentiments of a Byzantine hymn will declare how far their worship was removed from the grossest idolatry. “How can we with mortal eyes contemplate this image, whose celestial splendour the host of heaven presumes not to behold? HE who dwells in heaven condescends this day to visit us by his venerable image: HE who is seated on the Cherubim, visits us this day by a picture, which the Father has delineated with his immaculate hand, which he has formed in an ineffable manner, and which we sanctify by adoring it with fear and love.” Before the end of the sixth century, these images, *made without hands* (in Greek, it is a single word¹¹) were propagated in the camps and cities of the Eastern empire¹²: they were the objects of worship, and the instruments of miracles: and in the hour of danger or tumult, their venerable presence could revive the hope, rekindle the courage, or repress the fury, of the Roman legions. Of these pictures, the far greater part, the transcripts of a human pencil, could only pretend to a secondary likeness and improper title: but there were some of higher descent,

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Its copies.

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who derived their resemblance from an immediate contact with the original, endowed, for that purpose, with a miraculous and prolific virtue. The most ambitious aspired from a filial to a fraternal relation with the image of Edessa; and such is the *veronica* of Rome, or Spain, or Jerusalem, which Christ in his agony and bloody sweat applied to his face, and delivered to an holy matron. The fruitful precedent was speedily transferred to the Virgin Mary, and the saints and martyrs. In the church of Diospolis in Palestine, the features of the Mother of God¹³ were deeply inscribed in a marble column: the East and West have been decorated by the pencil of St. Luke; and the evangelist, who was perhaps a physician, has been forced to exercise the occupation of a painter, so profane and odious in the eyes of the primitive Christians. The Olympian Jove, created by the muse of Homer and the chissel of Phidias, might inspire a philosophic mind with momentary devotion: but these Catholic images were faintly and flatly delineated by monkish artists in the last degeneracy of taste and genius¹⁴.

Opposition
to image-
worship.

The worship of images had stolen into the church by insensible degrees, and each petty step was pleasing to the superstitious mind, as productive of comfort and innocent of sin. But in the beginning of the eighth century, in the full magnitude of the abuse, the more timorous Greeks were awakened by an apprehension, that under the mask of Christianity, they had restored the religion of

their fathers; they heard, with grief and impatience, the name of idolaters; the incessant charge of the Jews and Mahometans¹⁵, who derived from the Law and the Koran an immortal hatred to graven images and all relative worship. The servitude of the Jews might curb their zeal and depreciate their authority; but the triumphant Musulmans, who reigned at Damascus, and threatened Constantinople, cast into the scale of reproach the accumulated weight of truth and victory. The cities of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, had been fortified with the images of Christ, his mother, and his saints; and each city presumed on the hope or promise of miraculous defence. In a rapid conquest of ten years, the Arabs subdued those cities and these images; and, in their opinion, the Lord of Hosts pronounced a decisive judgment between the adoration and contempt of these mute and inanimate idols. For a while Edessa had braved the Persian assaults; but the chosen city, the spouse of Christ, was involved in the common ruin; and his divine resemblance became the slave and trophy of the infidels. After a servitude of three hundred years, the Palladium was yielded to the devotion of Constantinople, for a ransom of twelve thousand pounds of silver, the redemption of two hundred Musulmans, and a perpetual truce for the territory of Edessa¹⁶. In this season of distress and dismay, the eloquence of the monks was exercised in the defence of images; and they attempted to prove, that the

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sin and schism of the greatest part of the Orientals had forfeited the favour, and annihilated the virtue, of these precious symbols. But they were now opposed by the murmurs of many simple or rational Christians, who appealed to the evidence of texts, of facts, and of the primitive times, and secretly desired the reformation of the church. As the worship of images had never been established by any general or positive law, its progress in the Eastern empire had been retarded, or accelerated, by the differences of men and manners the local degrees of refinement, and the personal characters of the bishops. The splendid devotion was fondly cherished by the levity of the capital, and the inventive genius of the Byzantine clergy; while the rude and remote districts of Asia were strangers to this innovation of sacred luxury. "Many large congregations of Gnostics and Arians maintained, after their conversion, the simple worship which had preceded their separation; and the Armenians, the most warlike subjects of Rome, were not reconciled, in the twelfth century, to the sight of images". These various denominations of men afforded a fund of prejudice and aversion, of small account in the villages of Anatolia or Thrace, but which, in the fortune of a soldier, a prelate, or an eunuch, might be often connected with the powers of the church and state.

Leo the Iconoclast, and his successors,
A. D.
726—840.

Of such adventurers, the most fortunate was the emperor Leo the third¹⁸, who, from the mountains of Isauria, ascended the throne of the

East. He was ignorant of sacred and profane letters; but his education, his reason, perhaps his intercourse with the Jews and Arabs, had inspired the martial peasant with an hatred of images; and it was held to be the duty of a prince, to impose on his subjects the dictates of his own conscience. But in the outset of an unsettled reign, during ten years of toil and danger, Leo submitted to the meanness of hypocrisy, bowed before the idols which he despised, and satisfied the Roman pontiff with the annual professions of his orthodoxy and zeal. In the reformation of religion, his first steps were moderate and cautious: he assembled a great council of senators and bishops, and enacted, with their consent, that all the images should be removed from the sanctuary and altar to a proper height in the churches, where they might be visible to the eyes, and inaccessible to the superstition, of the people. But it was impossible on either side to check the rapid though adverse impulse of veneration and abhorrence: in their lofty position, the sacred images still edified their votaries and reproached the tyrant. He was himself provoked by resistance and invective; and his own party accused him of an imperfect discharge of his duty, and urged for his imitation, the example of the Jewish king, who had broken without scruple the brazen serpent of the temple. By a second edict, he proscribed the existence as well as the use of religious pictures; the churches of Constantinople and the provinces were cleansed from idolatry; the images of Christ, the Virgin,

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Their synod
of Constan-
tinople,
A. D. 754.

and the Saints, were demolished, or a smooth surface of plaster was spread over the walls of the edifice. The sect of the Iconoclasts was supported by the zeal and despotism of six emperors, and the East and West were involved in a noisy conflict of one hundred and twenty years. It was the design of Leo the Isaurian to pronounce the condemnation of images, as an article of faith, and by the authority of a general council: but the convocation of such an assembly was reserved for his son Constantine¹⁹; and though it is stigmatised by triumphant bigotry as a meeting of fools and atheists, their own partial and mutilated acts betray many symptoms of reason and piety. The debates and decrees of many provincial synods introduced the summons of the general council which met in the suburbs of Constantinople, and was composed of the respectable number of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops of Europe and Anatolia; for the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria were the slaves of the caliph, and the Roman pontiff had withdrawn the churches of Italy and the West from the communion of the Greeks. This Byzantine synod assumed the rank and powers of the seventh general council: yet even this title was a recognition of the six preceding assemblies which had laboriously built the structure of the Catholic faith. After a serious deliberation of six months, the three hundred and thirty-eight bishops subscribed an unanimous decree, that all visible symbols of Christ, except in the Eucharist, were either blasphemous or heretical; that image-worship

was a corruption of Christianity and a renewal of Paganism; that all such monuments of idolatry should be broken or erased; and that those who should refuse to deliver the objects of their private superstition, were guilty of disobedience to the authority of the church and of the emperor. In their loud and loyal acclamations, they celebrated the merits of their temporal redeemer; and to his zeal and justice they entrusted the execution of their spiritual censures. At Constantinople, as in the former councils, the will of the prince was the rule of episcopal faith; but on this occasion, I am inclined to suspect that a large majority of the prelates sacrificed their secret conscience to the temptations of hope and fear. In the long night of superstition, the Christians had wandered far away from the simplicity of the gospel: nor was it easy for them to discern the clue, and tread back the mazes, of the labyrinth. The worship of images was inseparably blended, at least to a pious fancy, with the Cross, the Virgin, the Saints and their relics: the holy ground was involved in a cloud of miracles and visions; and the nerves of the mind, curiosity and scepticism, were benumbed by the habits of obedience and belief. Constantine himself is accused of indulging a royal licence to doubt, or deny, or deride the mysteries of the Catholics²⁰, but they were deeply inscribed in the public and private creed of his bishops; and the boldest Iconoclast might assault with a secret horror, the monuments of popular devotion, which were consecrated to the

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Their creed.

CHAPTER. honour of his celestial patrons. In the reformation of the sixteenth century, freedom and knowledge had expanded all the faculties of man; the thirst of innovation superseded the reverence of antiquity, and the vigour of Europe could disdain those phantoms which terrified the sickly and servile weakness of the Greeks.

Their persecution of the images and monks,

A. D.

726—775.

The scandal of an abstract heresy can be only proclaimed to the people by the blast of the ecclesiastical trumpet; but the most ignorant can perceive, the most torpid must feel, the profanation and downfall of their visible deities. The first hostilities of Leo were directed against a lofty Christ on the vestibule, and above the gate, of the palace. A ladder had been planted for the assault, but it was furiously shaken by a crowd of zealots and women: they beheld, with pious transport, the ministers of sacrilege tumbling from on high, and dashed against the pavement; and the honours of the ancient martyrs were prostituted to these criminals, who justly suffered for murder and rebellion²¹. The execution of the Imperial edicts was resisted by frequent tumults in Constantinople and the provinces: the person of Leo was endangered, his officers were massacred, and the popular enthusiasm was quelled by the strongest efforts of the civil and military power. Of the Archipelago, or Holy Sea, the numerous islands were filled with images and monks: their votaries abjured, without scruple, the enemy of Christ, his mother, and the saints: they armed a fleet of boats and gallies, displayed their consecrated banners, and

boldly steered for the harbour of Constantinople, to place on the throne a new favourite of God and the people. They depended on the succour of a miracle; but their miracles were inefficient against the *Greek fire*; and, after the defeat and conflagration of their fleet, the naked islands were abandoned to the clemency or justice of the conqueror. The son of Leo, in the first year of his reign, had undertaken an expedition against the Saracens: during his absence, the capital, the palace, and the purple, were occupied by his kinsman Artavasdes, the ambitious champion of the orthodox faith. The worship of images was triumphantly restored: the patriarch renounced his dissimulation, or dissembled his sentiments; and the righteous claim of the usurper was acknowledged, both in the new, and in ancient, Rome. Constantine flew for refuge to his paternal mountains; but he descended at the head of the bold and affectionate Isaurians; and his final victory confounded the arms and predictions of the fanatics. His long reign was distracted with clamour, sedition, conspiracy, and mutual hatred, and sanguinary revenge: the persecution of images was the motive, or pretence, of his adversaries; and, if they missed a temporal diadem, they were rewarded by the Greeks with the crown of martyrdom. In every act of open and clandestine treason, the emperor felt the unforgiving enmity of the monks, the faithful slaves of the superstition to which they owed their riches and influence. They prayed, they preached, they

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absolved, they inflamed, they conspired: the solitude of Palestine poured forth a torrent of invective; and the pen of St. John Damascenus²², the last of the Greek fathers, devoted the tyrant's head, both in this world and the next²³. I am not at leisure to examine how far the monks provoked, nor how much they have exaggerated, their real and pretended sufferings, nor how many lost their lives or limbs, their eyes or their beards, by the cruelty of the emperor. From the chastisement of individuals, he proceeded to the abolition of the order; and, as it was wealthy and useless, his resentment might be stimulated by avarice and justified by patriotism. The formidable name and mission of the *Dragon*²⁴, his visitor-general, excited the terror and abhorrence of the *black* nation: the religious communities were dissolved; the buildings were converted into magazines, or barracks; the lands, moveables, and cattle, were confiscated; and our modern precedents will support the charge, that much wanton or malicious havock was exercised against the relics, and even the books, of the monasteries. With the habit and profession of monks, the public and private worship of images was rigorously proscribed; and it should seem, that a solemn abjuration of idolatry was exacted from the subjects, or at least from the clergy, of the Eastern empire²⁵.

State of Italy. The patient East abjured, with reluctance, her sacred images; they were fondly cherished, and vigorously defended, by the independent zeal of the Italians. In ecclesiastical rank and jurisdiction, the

the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome were nearly equal. But the Greek prelate was a domestic slave under the eye of his master, at whose nod he alternately passed from the convent to the throne, and from the throne to the convent. A distant and dangerous station, amidst the Barbarians of the West, excited the spirit and freedom of the Latin bishops. Their popular election endeared them to the Romans: the public and private indigence was relieved by their ample revenue; and the weakness or neglect of the emperors compelled them to consult, both in peace and war, the temporal safety of the city. In the school of adversity the priest insensibly imbibed the virtues and the ambition of a prince; the same character was assumed, the same policy was adopted, by the Italian, the Greek, or the Syrian, who ascended the chair of St. Peter; and, after the loss of her legions and provinces, the genius and fortune of the popes again restored the supremacy of Rome. It is agreed, that in the eighth century their dominion was founded on rebellion, and that the rebellion was produced, and justified, by the heresy of the Iconoclasts; but the conduct of the second and third Gregory, in this memorable contest, is variously interpreted by the wishes of their friends and enemies. The Byzantine writers unanimously declare, that, after a fruitless admonition, they pronounced the separation of the East and West, and deprived the sacrilegious tyrant of the revenue and sovereignty of Italy.

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CHAPTER XLIX. Their excommunication is still more clearly expressed by the Greeks, who beheld the accomplishment of the papal triumphs; and as they are more strongly attached to their religion than to their country, they praise, instead of blaming, the zeal and orthodoxy of these apostolical men²⁶. The modern champions of Rome are eager to accept the praise and the precedent: this great and glorious example of the deposition of royal heretics is celebrated by the cardinals Baronius and Bellarmine²⁷; and if they are asked, why the same thunders were not hurled against the Neros and Julians of antiquity? they reply, that the weakness of the primitive church was the sole cause of her patient loyalty²⁸. On this occasion, the effects of love and hatred are the same; and the zealous protestants, who seek to kindle the indignation, and to alarm the fears, of princes and magistrates, expatiate on the insolence and treason of the two Gregories against their lawful sovereign²⁹. They are defended only by the moderate Catholics, for the most part, of the Gallican church³⁰, who respect the saint, without approving the sin. These common advocates of the crown and the mitre circumscribe the truth of facts by the rule of equity, scripture, and tradition; and appeal to the evidence of the Latins³¹, and the lives³² and epistles of the popes themselves.

Epistles of
Gregory II.
to the emperor,
A. D. 727,

Two original epistles, from Gregory the second to the emperor Leo, are still extant³³; and if they cannot be praised as the most perfect models of eloquence and logic, they exhibit the

portrait, or at least the mask, of the founder of the papal monarchy. "During ten pure and fortunate years," says Gregory to the emperor, "we have tasted the annual comfort of your royal letters, subscribed in purple ink, with your own hand, the sacred pledges of your attachment to the orthodox creed of our fathers. How deplorable is the change! how tremendous the scandal! You now accuse the Catholics of idolatry; and, by the accusation you betray your own impiety and ignorance. To this ignorance we are compelled to adapt the grossness of our style and arguments: the first elements of holy letters are sufficient for your confusion; and were you to enter a grammar-school, and avow yourself the enemy of our worship, the simple and pious children would be provoked to cast their horn-books at your head." After this decent salutation, the pope attempts the usual distinction between the idols of antiquity and the Christian images. The former were the fanciful representations of phantoms or dæmons, at a time when the true God had not manifested his person in any visible likeness. The latter are genuine forms of Christ, his mother, and his saints, who had approved, by a crowd of miracles, the innocence and merit of this relative worship. He must indeed have trusted to the ignorance of Leo, since he could assert the perpetual use of images, from the apostolic age, and their venerable presence in the six synods of the Catholic church. A more specious argument is

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drawn from present possession and recent practice: the harmony of the Christian world supercedes the demand of a general council; and Gregory frankly confesses, that such assemblies can only be useful under the reign of an orthodox prince. To the impudent and inhuman Leo, more guilty than an heretic, he recommends peace, silence, and implicit obedience to his spiritual guides of Constantinople and Rome. The limits of civil and ecclesiastical powers are defined by the pontiff. To the former he appropriates the body; to the latter, the soul: the sword of justice is in the hands of the magistrate: the more formidable weapon of excommunication is entrusted to the clergy; and in the exercise of their divine commission, a zealous son will not spare his offending father: the successor of St. Peter may lawfully chastise the kings of the earth. “ You
“ assault us, O tyrant! with a carnal and
“ military hand: unarmed and naked, we can
“ only implore the Christ, the prince of the
“ heavenly host, that he will send unto you a
“ devil, for the destruction of your body and
“ the salvation of your soul. You declare, with
“ foolish arrogance, I will dispatch my orders
“ to Rome: I will break in pieces the image
“ of St. Peter; and Gregory, like his predecessor
“ Martin, shall be transported in chains, and
“ in exile, to the foot of the Imperial throne.
“ Would to God, that I might be permitted to
“ tread in the footsteps of the holy Martin; but
“ may the fate of Constans serve as a warning
“ to the persecutors of the church. After his

“ just condemnation by the bishops of Sicily,
 “ the tyrant was cut off, in the fulness of his
 “ sins, by a domestic servant: the saint is still
 “ adored by the nations of Scythia, among whom
 “ he ended his banishment and his life. But it is
 “ our duty to live for the edification and support
 “ of the faithful people; nor are we reduced to
 “ risk our safety on the event of a combat. Inca-
 “ pable as you are of defending your Roman
 “ subjects, the maritime situation of the city may
 “ perhaps expose it to your depredation; but
 “ we can remove to the distance of four-and-
 “ twenty *stadia* ³⁴, to the first fortress of the
 “ Lombards, and then — you may pursue the
 “ winds. Are you ignorant that the popes are
 “ the bond of union, the mediators of peace,
 “ between the East and West? The eyes of the
 “ nations are fixed on our humility; and they
 “ revere, as a God upon earth, the apostle
 “ St. Peter, whose image you threaten to de-
 “ stroy ³⁵. The remote and interior kingdoms
 “ of the West present their homage to Christ
 “ and his vicegerent; and we now prepare to
 “ visit one of their most powerful monarchs,
 “ who desires to receive from our hands the
 “ sacrament of baptism ³⁶. The Barbarians have
 “ submitted to the yoke of the gospel, while you
 “ alone are deaf to the voice of the Shepherd.
 “ These pious Barbarians are kindled into rage:
 “ they thirst to avenge the persecution of the
 “ East. Abandon your rash and fatal enterprise;
 “ reflect, tremble, and repent. If you persist,

C H A P. " we are innocent of the blood that will be
 XLIX. " spilt in the contest; may it fall on your own
 „ head. ”

Revolt of
 Italy.
 A. D. 728,
 &c.

The first assault of Leo against the images of Constantinople had been witnessed by a crowd of strangers from Italy and the West, who related with grief and indignation the sacrilege of the emperor. But on the reception of his proscriptive edict, they trembled for their domestic deities; the images of Christ and the Virgin, of the angels, martyrs, and saints, were abolished in all the churches of Italy; and a strong alternative was proposed to the Roman pontiff, the royal favour as the price of his compliance, degradation and exile as the penalty of his disobedience. Neither zeal nor policy allowed him to hesitate; and the haughty strain in which Gregory addressed the emperor displays his confidence in the truth of his doctrine or the powers of resistance. Without depending on prayers or miracles, he boldly armed against the public enemy, and his pastoral letters admonished the Italians of their danger and their duty³⁷. At this signal, Ravenna, Venice, and the cities of the Exarchate and Pentapolis, adhered to the cause of religion; their military force by sea and land consisted, for the most part, of the natives; and the spirit of patriotism and zeal was transfused into the mercenary strangers. The Italians swore to live and die in the defence of the pope and the holy images; the Roman people was devoted to their father, and even the Lombards were ambitious

to share the merit and advantage of this holy war. The most treasonable act, but the most obvious revenge, was the destruction of the statues of Leo himself: the most effectual and pleasing measure of rebellion, was the withholding the tribute of Italy, and depriving him of a power which he had recently abused by the imposition of a new capitation³⁸. A form of administration was preserved by the election of magistrates and governors; and so high was the public indignation, that the Italians were prepared to create an orthodox emperor, and to conduct him with a fleet and army to the palace of Constantinople. In that palace, the Roman bishops, the second and third Gregory, were condemned as the authors of the revolt, and every attempt was made either by fraud or force to seize their persons, and to strike at their lives. The city was repeatedly visited or assaulted by captains of the guards, and dukes and exarchs of high dignity or secret trust; they landed with foreign troops, they obtained some domestic aid, and the superstition of Naples may blush that her fathers were attached to the cause of heresy. But these clandestine or open attacks were repelled by the courage and vigilance of the Romans; the Greeks were overthrown and massacred, their leaders suffered an ignominious death, and the popes, however inclined to mercy, refused to intercede for these guilty victims. At Ravenna³⁹, the several quarters of the city had long exercised a bloody and hereditary feud; in religious con-

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a synod of ninety-three bishops against the heresy of the Iconoclasts. With their consent, he pronounced a general excommunication against all who by word or deed should attack the tradition of the fathers and the images of the saints: in this sentence the emperor was tacitly involved⁴⁰, but the vote of a last and hopeless remonstrance may seem to imply that the anathema was yet suspended over his guilty head. No sooner had they confirmed their own safety, the worship of images, and the freedom of Rome and Italy, than the popes appear to have relaxed of their severity, and to have spared the relics of the Byzantine dominion. Their moderate counsels delayed and prevented the election of a new emperor, and they exhorted the Italians not to separate from the body of the Roman monarchy. The exarch was permitted to reside within the walls of Ravenna, a captive rather than a master; and till the Imperial coronation of Charlemagne, the government of Rome and Italy was exercised in the name of the successors of Constantine⁴¹.

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The liberty of Rome, which had been oppressed by the arms and arts of Augustus, was rescued, after seven hundred and fifty years of servitude, from the persecution of Leo the Isaurian. By the Cæsars, the triumphs of the consuls had been annihilated: in the decline and fall of the empire, the god Terminus, the sacred boundary, had insensibly receded from the ocean, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates; and Rome was reduced to her ancient territory from Viterbo

Republic of
Rome.

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to Terracina, and from Narni to the mouth of the Tyber ⁴². When the kings were banished, the republic reposed on the firm basis which had been founded by their wisdom and virtue. Their perpetual jurisdiction was divided between two annual magistrates: the senate continued to exercise the powers of administration and counsel; and the legislative authority was distributed in the assemblies of the people, by a well-proportioned scale of property and service. Ignorant of the arts of luxury, the primitive Romans had improved the science of government and war: the will of the community was absolute: the rights of individuals were sacred: one hundred and thirty thousand citizens were armed for defence or conquest; and a band of robbers and outlaws was moulded into a nation, deserving of freedom and ambitious of glory ⁴³. When the sovereignty of the Greek emperors was extinguished, the ruins of Rome presented the sad image of depopulation and decay: her slavery was an habit, her liberty an accident; the effect of superstition, and the object of her own amazement and terror. The last vestige of the substance, or even the forms, of the constitution, was obliterated from the practice and memory of the Romans; and they were devoid of knowledge, or virtue, again to build the fabric of a commonwealth. Their scanty remnant, the offspring of slaves and strangers, was despicable in the eyes of the victorious Barbarians. As often as the Franks or Lombards expressed their most bitter contempt of a foe,

they called him a Roman; "and in this name;" says the bishop Liutprand, "we include whatever is base, whatever is cowardly, whatever is perfidious, the extremes of avarice and luxury, and every vice that can prostitute the dignity of human nature". By the necessity of their situation, the inhabitants of Rome were cast into the rough model of a republican government: they were compelled to elect some judges in peace and some leaders in war: the nobles assembled to deliberate, and their resolves could not be executed without the union and consent of the multitude. The style of the Roman senate and people was revived, but the spirit was fled; and their new independence was disgraced by the tumultuous conflict of licentiousness and oppression. The want of laws could only be supplied by the influence of religion, and their foreign and domestic counsels were moderated by the authority of the bishop. His alms, his sermons, his correspondence with the kings and prelates of the West, his recent services, their gratitude, and oath, accustomed the Romans to consider him as the first magistrate or prince of the city. The Christian humility of the popes was not offended by the name of *Dominus*, or Lord; and their face and inscription are still apparent on the most ancient coins. Their temporal dominion is now confirmed by the reverence of a thousand years; and their noblest title is the free choice of a people, whom they had redeemed from slavery.

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Rome attack-
ed by the
Lombards,

A. D.

730—752.

In the quarrels of ancient Greece, the holy people of Elis enjoyed a perpetual peace, under the protection of Jupiter, and in the exercise of the Olympic games⁴⁷. Happy would it have been for the Romans, if a similar privilege had guarded the patrimony of St. Peter from the calamities of war; if the Christians, who visited the holy threshold, would have sheathed their swords in the presence of the apostle and his successor. But this mystic circle could have been traced only by the wand of a legislator and a sage: this pacific system was incompatible with the zeal and ambition of the popes: their Romans were not addicted, like the inhabitants of Elis, to the innocent and placid labours of agriculture; and the Barbarians of Italy, though softened by the climate, were far below the Grecian states in the institutions of public and private life. A memorable example of repentance and piety was exhibited by Liutprand king of the Lombards. In arms, at the gate of the Vatican, the conqueror listened to the voice of Gregory the second⁴⁸, withdrew his troops, resigned his conquests, respectfully visited the church of St. Peter, and, after performing his devotions, offered his sword and dagger, his cuirass and mantle, his silver cross, and his crown of gold, on the tomb of the apostle. But this religious fervour was the illusion, perhaps the artifice, of the moment; the sense of interest is strong and lasting; the love of arms and rapine was congenial to the Lombards; and both the prince and people were irresistibly tempted by the disorders of Italy,

the nakedness of Rome, and the unwarlike profession of her new chief. On the first edicts of the emperor, they declared themselves the champions of the holy images: Liutprand invaded the province of Romagna, which had already assumed that distinctive appellation; the Catholics of the Exarchate yielded without reluctance to his civil and military power; and a foreign enemy was introduced for the first time into the impregnable fortrefs of Ravenna. That city and fortrefs were speedily recovered by the active diligence and maritime forces of the Venetians; and those faithful subjects obeyed the exhortation of Gregory himself, in separating the personal guilt of Leo from the general cause of the Roman empire⁴⁹. The Greeks were less mindful of the service, than the Lombards of the injury: the two nations, hostile in their faith, were reconciled in a dangerous and unnatural alliance; the king and the exarch marched to the conquest of Spoleto and Rome: the storm evaporated without effect, but the policy of Liutprand alarmed Italy with a vexatious alternative of hostility and truce. His successor Astolphus declared himself the equal enemy of the emperor and the pope: Ravenna was subdued by force or treachery⁵⁰, and this final conquest extinguished the series of the exarchs, who had reigned with a subordinate power since the time of Justinian and the ruin of the Gothic kingdom. Rome was summoned to acknowledge the victorious Lombard as her lawful sovereign; the annual tribute of a piece of gold was fixed as the ransom of each citizen, and the

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sword of destruction was unsheathed to exact the penalty of her disobedience. The Romans hesitated; they entreated; they complained; and the threatening Barbarians were checked by arms and negociations, till the popes had engaged the friendship of an ally and avenger beyond the Alps⁵¹.

Her deliver-
ance by
Pepin,
A. D. 754.

In his distress, the first Gregory had implored the aid of the hero of the age, of Charles Martel, who governed the French monarchy with the humble title of mayor or duke; and who, by his signal victory over the Saracens, had saved his country, and perhaps Europe, from the Mahometan yoke. The ambassadors of the pope were received by Charles with decent reverence; but the greatness of his occupations, and the shortness of his life, prevented his interference in the affairs of Italy, except by a friendly and ineffectual mediation. His son Pepin, the heir of his power and virtues, assumed the office of champion of the Roman church; and the zeal of the French prince appears to have been prompted by the love of glory and religion. But the danger was on the banks of the Tyber, the succour on those of the Seine; and our sympathy is cold to the relation of distant misery. Amidst the tears of the city, Stephen the third embraced the generous resolution of visiting in person the courts of Lombardy and France, to deprecate the injustice of his enemy, or excite the pity and indignation of his friend. After soothing the public despair by litanies and orations, he undertook this laborious journey with the ambassadors of the French monarch and the

Greek emperor. The king of the Lombards was inexorable; but his threats could not silence the complaints, nor retard the speed, of the Roman pontiff, who traversed the Pennine Alps, reposed in the abbey of St. Maurice, and hastened to grasp the right-hand of his protector; a hand which was never lifted in vain, either in war or friendship. Stephen was entertained as the visible successor of the apostle; at the next assembly, the field of March or of May, his injuries were exposed to a devout and warlike nation, and he repassed the Alps, not as a suppliant, but as a conqueror, at the head of a French army, which was led by the king in person. The Lombards, after a weak resistance, obtained an ignominious peace, and swore to restore the possessions, and to respect the sanctity, of the Roman church. But no sooner was Astolphus delivered from the presence of the French arms, than he forgot his promise and resented his disgrace. Rome was again encompassed by his arms; and Stephen, apprehensive of fatiguing the zeal of his Transalpine allies, enforced his complaint and request, by an eloquent letter in the name and person of St. Peter himself². The apostle assures his adoptive sons, the king, the clergy, and the nobles of France, that dead in the flesh, he is still alive in the spirit; that they now hear, and must obey, the voice of the founder and guardian of the Roman church: that the Virgin, the angels, the saints, and the martyrs, and all the host of heaven, unanimously urge the request, and will confess the obligation; that riches, victo-

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ry, and paradise, will crown their pious enterprize, and that eternal damnation will be the penalty of their neglect, if they suffer his tomb, his temple, and his people, to fall into the hands of the perfidious Lombards. The second expedition of Pepin was not less rapid and fortunate than the first: St. Peter was satisfied, Rome was again saved, and Astolphus was taught the lessons of justice and sincerity by the scourge of a foreign master. After this double chastisement, the Lombards languished about twenty years in a state of languor and decay. But their minds were not yet humbled to their condition; and instead of affecting the pacific virtues of the feeble, they peevishly harassed the Romans with a repetition of claims, evasions, and inroads, which they undertook without reflection and terminated without glory. On either side, their expiring monarchy was pressed by the zeal and prudence of pope Adrian the first, the genius, the fortune, and greatness of Charlemagne the son of Pepin; these heroes of the church and state were united in public and domestic friendship, and while they trampled on the prostrate, they varnished their proceedings with the fairest colours of equity and moderation⁵³. The passes of the Alps, and the walls of Pavia, were the only defence of the Lombards; the former were surprised, the latter were invested, by the son of Pepin; and after a blockade of two years, Desiderius, the last of their native princes, surrendered his sceptre and his capital. Under the dominion of a foreign king, but in the possession of

Conquest of
Lombardy
by Charle-
magne.
A. D. 774.

of their national laws, the Lombards became the brethren, rather than the subjects, of the Franks; who derived their blood, and manners, and language, from the same Germanic origin⁵⁴.

The mutual obligations of the popes and the Carlovingian family, form the important link of ancient and modern, of civil and ecclesiastical, history. In the conquest of Italy, the champions of the Roman church obtained a favourable occasion, a specious title, the wishes of the people, the prayers and intrigues of the clergy. But the most essential gifts of the popes to the Carlovingian race were the dignities of king of France⁵⁵, and of patrician of Rome. I. Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter, the nations began to resume the practice of seeking, on the banks of the Tyber, their kings, their laws, and the oracles of their fate. The Franks were perplexed between the name and substance of their government. All the powers of royalty were exercised by Pepin, mayor of the palace; and nothing, except the regal title, was wanting to his ambition. His enemies were crushed by his valour; his friends were multiplied by his liberality; his father had been the saviour of Christendom; and the claims of personal merit were repeated and ennobled in a descent of four generations. The name and image of royalty was still preserved in the last descendant of Clovis, the feeble Childeric; but his obsolete right could only be used as an instrument of sedition: the nation was desirous of restoring the simplicity of the constitution; and Pepin, a subject and a prince, was

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Pepin and
Charle-
magne, king
of France,
A. D. 751.
753. 768.

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ambitious to ascertain his own rank and the fortune of his family. The mayor and the nobles were bound, by an oath of fidelity, to the royal phantom: the blood of Clovis was pure and sacred in their eyes; and their common ambassadors addressed the Roman pontiff, to dispel their scruples, or to absolve their promise. The interest of pope Zachary, the successor of the two Gregories, prompted him to decide, and to decide in their favour: he pronounced that the nation might lawfully unite, in the same person, the title and authority of king; and that the unfortunate Childeric, a victim of the public safety, should be degraded, shaved, and confined in a monastery for the remainder of his days. An answer, so agreeable to their wishes, was accepted by the Franks, as the opinion of a casuist, the sentence of a judge, or the oracle of a prophet: the Merovingian race disappeared from the earth; and Pepin was exalted on a buckler by the suffrage of a free people, accustomed to obey his laws and to march under his standard. His coronation was twice performed, with the sanction of the popes, by their most faithful servant St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, and by the grateful hands of Stephen the third, who, in the monastery of St. Denys, placed the diadem on the head of his benefactor. The royal unction of the kings of Israel was dextrously applied⁶⁶: the successor of St. Peter assumed the character of a divine ambassador: a German chieftain was transformed into the Lord's anointed; and this Jewish rite has been diffused and

maintained by the superstition and vanity of modern Europe. The Franks were absolved from their ancient oath; but a dire anathema was thundered against them and their posterity, if they should dare to renew the same freedom of choice, or to elect a king, except in the holy and meritorious race of the Carlovingian princes. Without apprehending the future danger, these princes gloried in their present security: the secretary of Charlemagne affirms, that the French sceptre was transferred by the authority of the popes⁵⁷; and, in their boldest enterprizes, they insist, with confidence, on this signal and successful act of temporal jurisdiction.

II. In the change of manners and language, the patricians of Rome⁵⁸ were far removed from the senate of Romulus, or the palace of Constantine, from the free nobles of the republic, or the fictitious parents of the emperor. After the recovery of Italy and Africa by the arms of Justinian, the importance and danger of those remote provinces required the presence of a supreme magistrate; he was indifferently styled the exarch or the patrician; and the governors of Ravenna, who fill their place in the chronology of princes, extended their jurisdiction over the Roman city. Since the revolt of Italy and the loss of the Exarchate, the distress of the Romans had exacted some sacrifice of their independence. Yet, even in this act, they exercised the right of disposing of themselves; and the decrees of the senate and people successively invested Charles Martel and his posterity, with the honours of patrician of

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Rome. The leaders of a powerful nation would have disdained a servile title and subordinate office; but the reign of the Greek emperors was suspended; and, in the vacancy of the empire, they derived a more glorious commission from the pope and the republic. The Roman ambassadors presented these patricians with the keys of the shrine of St. Peter, as a pledge and symbol of sovereignty; with a holy banner, which it was their right and duty to unfurl in the defence of the church and city". In the time of Charles Martel and of Pepin, the interposition of the Lombard kingdom covered the freedom, while it threatened the safety, of Rome; and the *patriciani* represented only the title, the service, the alliance, of these distant protectors. The power and policy of Charlemagne annihilated an enemy, and imposed a master. In his first visit to the capital, he was received with all the honours which had formerly been paid to the exarch, the representative of the emperor; and these honours obtained some new decorations from the joy and gratitude of pope Adrian the first°. No sooner was he informed of the sudden approach of the monarch, than he dispatched the magistrates and nobles of Rome to meet him, with the banner, about thirty miles from the city. At the distance of one mile, the Flaminian way was lined with the *schools*, or national communities, of Greeks, Lombards, Saxons, &c.: the Roman youth was under arms; and the children of a more tender age, with palms and olive branches in their hands, chaunted the praises of their great

deliverer. At the aspect of the holy crosses, and on signs of the saints, he dismounted from his horse, led the procession of his nobles to the Vatican, and, as he ascended the stairs, devoutly kissed each step of the threshold of the apostles. In the portico, Adrian expected him at the head of his clergy: they embraced, as friends and equals; but in their march to the altar, the king or patrician assumed the right hand of the pope. Nor was the Frank content with these vain and empty demonstrations of respect. In the twenty-six years that elapsed, between the conquest of Lombardy and his Imperial coronation, Rome, which had been delivered by the sword, was subject, as his own, to the sceptre, of Charlemagne. The people swore allegiance to his person and family: in his name money was coined, and justice was administered; and the election of the popes was examined and confirmed by his authority. Except an original and self-herent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining, which the title of emperor could add to the patrician of Rome⁶¹.

The gratitude of the Carlovingsians was adequate to these obligations, and their names are consecrated, as the saviours and benefactors of the Roman church. Her ancient patrimony of farms and houses was transformed by their bounty into the temporal dominion of cities and provinces; and the donation of the exarchate was the first fruits of the conquests of Pepin⁶². Astolphus with a sigh relinquished his prey; the keys and the hostages of the principal cities were delivered

Donations of
Pepin and
Charle-
magne to the
popes.

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to the French ambassador; and, in his master's name, he presented them before the tomb of St. Peter. The ample measure of the Exarchate⁶³ might comprise all the provinces of Italy which had obeyed the emperor and his vicegerent; but its strict and proper limits were included in the territories of Ravenna, Bologna, and Ferrara: its inseparable dependency was the Pentapolis, which stretched along the Adriatic from Rimini to Ancona, and advanced into the midland country as far as the ridges of the Apennine. In this transaction, the ambition and avarice of the popes has been severely condemned. Perhaps the humility of a Christian priest should have rejected an earthly kingdom, which it was not easy for him to govern without renouncing the virtues of his profession. Perhaps a faithful subject, or even a generous enemy, would have been less impatient to divide the spoils of the Barbarian; and if the emperor had entrusted Stephen to solicit in his name the restitution of the Exarchate, I will not absolve the pope from the reproach of treachery and falsehood. But in the rigid interpretation of the laws, every one may accept, without injury, whatever his benefactor can bestow without injustice. The Greek emperor had abdicated or forfeited his right to the Exarchate; and the sword of Astolphus was broken by the stronger sword of the Carlovingian. It was not in the cause of the Iconoclast that Pepin had exposed his person and army in a double expedition beyond the Alps: he possessed, and might lawfully alienate,

his conquests; and to the importunities of the Greeks, he piously replied, that no human consideration should tempt him to resume the gift which he had conferred on the Roman pontiff for the remission of his sins and the salvation of his soul. The splendid donation was granted in supreme and absolute dominion, and the world beheld for the first time a Christian bishop invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince; the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, and the wealth of the palace of Ravenna. In the dissolution of the Lombard kingdom, the inhabitants of the dutchy of Spoleto⁶⁴ sought a refuge from the storm, shaved their heads after the Roman fashion, declared themselves the servants and subjects of St. Peter, and completed, by this voluntary surrender, the present circle of the ecclesiastical state. That mysterious circle was enlarged to an indefinite extent, by the verbal or written donation of Charlemagne⁶⁵, who, in the first transports of his victory, despoiled himself and the Grerek emperor of the cities and islands which had formerly been annexed to the Exarchate. But, in the cooler moments of absence and reflexion, he viewed, with an eye of jealousy and envy, the recent greatness of his ecclesiastical ally. The execution of his own and his father's promises was respectfully eluded: the king of the Franks and Lombards asserted the inalienable rights of the empire; and, in his life and death, Ravenna⁶⁶, as well as Rome, was numbered in the list of his metropolitan cities. The sovereignty of

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40 THE DECLINE AND FALL

CHAP. XLIX. the Exarchate melted away in the hands of the popes: they found in the archbishops of Ravenna a dangerous and domestic rival⁶⁷: the nobles and people disdained the yoke of a priest; and, in the disorders of the times, they could only retain the memory of ancient claim, which, in a more prosperous age, they have revived and realized.

Forgery of
the donation
of Constantine.

Fraud is the resource of weakness and cunning; and the strong, though ignorant, Barbarian was often entangled in the net of sacerdotal policy. The Vatican and Lateran were an arsenal and manufacture, which, according to the occasion have produced or concealed a various collection of false or genuine, of corrupt or suspicious, acts, as they tended to promote the interest of the Roman church. Before the end of the eighth century, some apostolical scribe, perhaps the notorious Isidore, composed the decretals, and the donation of Constantine, the two magic pillars of the spiritual and temporal monarchy of the popes. This memorable donation was introduced to the world by an epistle of Adrian the first, who exhorts Charlemagne to imitate the liberality, and revive the name, of the great Constantine⁶⁸. According to the legend, the first of the Christian emperors was healed of the leprosy, and purified in the waters of baptism, by St. Silvester, the Roman bishop; and never was physician more gloriously recompensed. His royal proselyte withdrew from the seat and patrimony of St. Peter: declared his resolution of founding a new capital

in the East; and resigned to the popes the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the West⁶⁹. This fiction was productive of the most beneficial effects. The Greek princes were convicted of the guilt of usurpation; and the revolt of Gregory was the claim of his lawful inheritance. The popes were delivered from their debt of gratitude; and the nominal gifts of the Carlovingians were no more than the just and irrevocable restitution of a scanty portion of the ecclesiastical state. The sovereignty of Rome no longer depended on the choice of a fickle people; and the successors of St. Peter and Constantine were invested with the purple and prerogatives of the Cæsars. So deep was the ignorance and credulity of the times, that the most absurd of fables was received, with equal reverence, in Greece and in France, and is still enrolled among the decrees of the canon law⁷⁰. The emperors, and the Romans, were incapable of discerning a forgery, that subverted their rights and freedom; and the only opposition proceeded from a Sabine monastery which, in the beginning of the twelfth century, disputed the truth and validity of the donation of Constantine⁷¹. In the revival of letters and liberty this fictitious deed was transpierced by the pen of Laurentius Valla, the pen of an eloquent critic and a Roman patriot⁷². His contemporaries of the fifteenth century were astonished at his sacrilegious boldness; yet such is the silent and irresistible progress of reason, that before the end of

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the next age, the fable was rejected by the contempt of historians ⁷³ and poets ⁷⁴, and the tacit or modest censure of the advocates of the Roman church ⁷⁵. The popes themselves have indulged a smile at the credulity of the vulgar ⁷⁶; but a false and obsolete title still sanctifies their reign; and, by the same fortune which has attended the decretals and the Sibylline oracles, the edifice has subsisted after the foundations have been undermined.

Restoration
of images in
the East by
the empress
Irene,
A. D. 780,
&c.

While the popes established in Italy their freedom and dominion, the images, the first cause of their revolt, were restored in the Eastern empire ⁷⁷. Under the reign of Constantine the fifth, the union of civil and ecclesiastical power had overthrown the tree, without extirpating the root, of superstition. The idols, for such they were now held, were secretly cherished by the order and the sex most prone to devotion; and the fond alliance of the monks and females, obtained a final victory over the reason and authority of man. Leo the fourth maintained with less rigour the religion of his father and grandfather; but his wife, the fair and ambitious Irene, had imbibed the zeal of the Athenians, the heirs of the idolatry, rather than the philosophy, of their ancestors. During the life of her husband, these sentiments were inflamed by danger and dissimulation, and she could only labour to protect and promote some favourite monks whom she drew from their caverns, and seated on the metropolitan thrones of the East. But as soon as she reigned

in her own name and that of her son, Irene more seriously undertook the ruin of the Iconoclasts; and the first step of her future persecution, was a general edict for liberty of conscience. In the restoration of the monks, a thousand images were exposed to the public veneration; a thousand legends were invented in their sufferings and miracles. By the opportunities of death or removal, the episcopal seats were judiciously filled; the most eager competitors for earthly or celestial favour, anticipated and flattered the judgment of their sovereign; and the promotion of her secretary Tarasius, gave Irene the patriarch of Constantinople, and the command of the Oriental church. But the decrees of a general council could only be repeated by a similar assembly⁷⁸; the Iconoclasts whom she convened, were bold in possession, and averse to debate; and the feeble voice of the bishops was re-echoed by the more formidable clamour of the soldiers and the people of Constantinople. The delay and intrigues of a year, the separation of the disaffected troops, and the choice of Nice for a second orthodox synod, removed these obstacles; and the episcopal conscience was again, after the Greek fashion, in the hands of the prince. No more than eighteen days were allowed for the consummation of this important work; the Iconoclasts appeared, not as judges, but as criminals or penitents; the scene was decorated by the legates of pope Adrian and the Eastern patriarchs⁷⁹, the decrees were framed by the president Tarasius, and ratified by

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VIIIth general council,
II^d of Nice,
A. D. 787.
Sept. 24 —
Oct. 23.

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the acclamations and subscriptions of three hundred and fifty bishops. They unanimously pronounced, that the worship of images is agreeable to scripture and reason, to the fathers and councils of the church: but they hesitate whether that worship be relative or direct; whether the Godhead, and the figure, of Christ be entitled to the same mode of adoration. Of this second Nicene council, the acts are still extant; a curious monument of superstition and ignorance, of falsehood and folly. I shall only notice the judgment of the bishops, on the comparative merit of image-worship and morality. A monk had concluded a truce with the dæmon of fornication, on condition of interrupting his daily prayers to a picture that hung in his cell. His scruples prompted him to consult the abbot. "Rather than abstain from
"adoring Christ and his Mother in their holy
"images, it would be better for you," replied the casuist, "to enter every brothel, and visit
"every prostitute, in the city".

Final establishment of
images by
the empress
Theodora,
A. D. 841.

For the honour of orthodoxy, at least the orthodoxy of the Roman church, it is somewhat unfortunate, that the two princes who convened the two councils of Nice, are both stained with the blood of their sons. The second of these assemblies was approved and rigorously executed by the despotism of Irene, and she refused her adversaries the toleration which at first she had granted to her friends. During the five succeeding reigns, a period of thirty-eight years, the contest was maintained, with

unabated rage and various success, between the worshippers and the breakers of the images; but I am not inclined to pursue with minute diligence the repetition of the same events. Nicephorus allowed a general liberty of speech and practice; and the only virtue of his reign is accused by the monks as the cause of his temporal and eternal perdition. Superstition and weakness formed the character of Michael the first, but the saints and images were incapable of supporting their votary on the throne. In the purple, Leo the fifth asserted the name and religion of an Armenian; and the idols, with their seditious adherents, were condemned to a second exile. Their applause would have sanctified the murder of an impious tyrant, but his assassin and successor, the second Michael, was tainted from his birth with the Phrygian heresies: he attempted to mediate between the contending parties; and the intractable spirit of the Catholics insensibly cast him into the opposite scale. His moderation was guarded by timidity; but his son Theophilus, alike ignorant of fear and pity, was the last and most cruel of the Iconoclasts. The enthusiasm of the times ran strongly against them; and the emperors, who stemmed the torrent, were exasperated and punished by the public hatred. After the death of Theophilus, the final victory of the images was achieved by a second female, his widow Theodora, whom he left the guardian of the empire. Her measures were bold and decisive. The fiction of a tardy repentance absolved the

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fame and the soul of her deceased husband : the sentence of the Iconoclast was commuted from the loss of his eyes to a whipping of two hundred lashes : the bishops trembled, the monks shouted, and the festival of orthodoxy preserves the annual memory of the triumph of the images. A single question yet remained, whether they are endowed with any proper and inherent sanctity : it was agitated by the Greeks of the eleventh century ⁸¹; and as this opinion has the strongest recommendation of absurdity, I am surprised that it was not more explicitly decided in the affirmative. In the West, pope Adrian the first accepted and announced the decrees of the Nicene assembly, which is now revered by the Catholics as the seventh in rank of the general councils. Rome and Italy were docile to the voice of their father; but the greatest part of the Latin Christians were far behind in the race of superstition. The churches of France, Germany, England, and Spain, steered a middle course between the adoration and the destruction of images, which they admitted into their temples, not as objects of worship, but as lively and useful memorials of faith and history. An angry book of controversy was composed and published in the name of Charlemagne ⁸²; under his authority a synod of three hundred bishops was assembled at Frankfort ⁸³: they blamed the fury of the Iconoclasts, but they pronounced a more severe censure against the superstition of the Greeks, and the decrees of their pretended council, which was long

Reluctance
of the Franks
and of Char-
lemagne,
A. D. 794.
&c.

despised by the Barbarians of the West ⁸⁴. Among them the worship of images advanced with a silent and insensible progress; but a large atonement is made for their hesitation and delay, by the gross idolatry of the ages which precede the reformation, and of the countries, both in Europe and America, which are still immersed in the gloom of superstition.

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It was after the Nicene synod, and under the reign of the pious Irene, that the popes consummated the separation of Rome and Italy, by the translation of the empire to the less orthodox Charlemagne. They were compelled to chuse between the rival nations: religion was not the sole motive of their choice; and while they dissembled the failings of their friends, they beheld, with reluctance and suspicion, the Catholic virtues of their foes. The difference of language and manners had perpetuated the enmity of the two capitals; and they were alienated from each other by the hostile opposition of seventy years. In that schism the Romans had tasted of freedom, and the popes of sovereignty: their submission would have exposed them to the revenge of a jealous tyrant; and the revolution of Italy had betrayed the impotence, as well as the tyranny, of the Byzantine court. The Greek emperors had restored the images, but they had not restored the Calabrian estates ⁸⁵ and the Illyrian diocese ⁸⁶, which the Iconoclasts had torn away from the successors of St. Peter; and pope Adrian threatens them with a sentence of excommunication unless

Final separation of the popes from the Eastern empire,
A. D.
774—800.

CHAP. they speedily abjure this practical heresy⁸⁷. The
 XLIX. Greeks were now orthodox, but their religion might be tainted by the breath of the reigning monarch: the Franks were now contumacious; but a discerning eye might discern their approaching conversion from the use, to the adoration, of images. The name of Charlemagne was stained by the polemic acrimony of his scribes; but the conqueror himself conformed, with the temper of a statesman, to the various practice of France and Italy. In his four pilgrimages or visits to the Vatican, he embraced the popes in the communion of friendship and piety; knelt before the tomb, and consequently before the image, of the apostle; and joined, without scruple, in all the prayers and processions of the Roman liturgy. Would prudence or gratitude allow the pontiffs to renounce their benefactor? Had they a right to alienate his gift of the Exarchate? Had they power to abolish his government of Rome? The title of patrician was below the merit and greatness of Charlemagne; and it was only by reviving the Western empire that they could pay their obligations or secure their establishment. By this decisive measure they would finally eradicate the claims of the Greeks: from the debasement of a provincial town, the majesty of Rome would be restored: the Latin Christians would be united, under a supreme head, in their ancient metropolis; and the conquerors of the West would receive their crown from the successors of St. Peter. The Roman church would acquire a zealous and respectable advocate;
 and

and, under the shadow of the Carlovingian power, the bishop might exercise, with honour and safety, the government of the city⁸⁸. C H A P. XLIX.

Before the ruin of paganism in Rome, the competition for a wealthy bishopric had often been productive of tumult and bloodshed. The people was less numerous, but the times were more savage, the prize more important, and the chair of St. Peter was fiercely disputed by the leading ecclesiastics who aspired to the rank of sovereign. The reign of Adrian the first⁸⁹ surpasses the measure of past or succeeding ages⁹⁰; the walls of Rome, the sacred patrimony, the ruin of the Lombards, and the friendship of Charlemagne, were the trophies of his fame: he secretly edified the throne of his successors, and displayed in a narrow space the virtues of a great prince. His memory was revered; but in the next election, a priest of the Lateran, Leo the third, was preferred to the nephew and the favourite of Adrian, whom he had promoted to the first dignities of the church. Their acquiescence or repentance disguised, above four years, the blackest intention of revenge, till the day of a procession, when a furious band of conspirators dispersed the unarmed multitude, and assaulted with blows and wounds the sacred person of the pope. But their enterprize on his life or liberty was disappointed, perhaps by their own confusion and remorse. Leo was left for dead on the ground; on his revival from the swoon, the effect of his loss of blood, he recovered his speech and sight; and this natural event

Coronation
of Charle-
magne as
emperor of
Rome and of
the West,
A. D. 800,
Dec. 25.

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was improved to the miraculous restoration of his eyes and tongue, of which he had been deprived, twice deprived, by the knife of the assassins". From his prison, he escaped to the Vatican; the duke of Spoleto hastened to his rescue, Charlemagne sympathised in his injury, and in his camp of Paderborn in Westphalia, accepted or solicited a visit from the Roman pontiff. Leo repassed the Alps with a commission of counts and bishops, the guards of his safety and the judges of his innocence; and it was not without reluctance, that the conqueror of the Saxons delayed till the ensuing year the personal discharge of this pious office. In his fourth and last pilgrimage, he was received at Rome with the due honours of king and patrician: Leo was permitted to purge himself by oath of the crimes imputed to his charge: his enemies were silenced, and the sacrilegious attempt against his life was punished by the mild and insufficient penalty of exile. On the festival of Christmas, the last year of the eighth century, Charlemagne appeared in the church of St. Peter; and, to gratify the vanity of Rome, he had exchanged the simple dress of his country for the habit of a patrician". After the celebration of the holy mysteries, Leo suddenly placed a precious crown on his head", and the dome resounded with the acclamations of the people, "Long life and victory to Charles, the most
" pious Augustus, crowned by God the great
" and pacific emperor of the Romans!" The head and body of Charlemagne were consecrated by the royal unction: after the example of the

Cæsars, he was saluted or adored by the pontiff; his coronation oath represents a promise to maintain the faith and privileges of the church; and the first fruits were paid in his rich offerings to the shrine of the apostle. In his familiar conversation, the emperor protested his ignorance of the intentions of Leo, which he would have disappointed by his absence on that memorable day. But the preparations of the ceremony must have disclosed the secret; and the journey of Charlemagne reveals his knowledge and expectation: he had acknowledged that the Imperial title was the object of his ambition, and a Roman synod had pronounced, that it was the only adequate reward of his merit and services ⁹⁴.

The appellation of *great* has been often bestowed and sometimes deserved, but CHARLEMAGNE is the only prince in whose favour the title has been indissolubly blended with the name. That name, with the addition of *saint*, is inserted in the Roman calendar; and the saint, by a rare felicity, is crowned with the praises of the historians and philosophers of an enlightened age ⁹⁵. His *real* merit is doubtless enhanced by the barbarism of the nation and the times from which he emerged: but the *apparent* magnitude of an object is likewise enlarged by an unequal comparison; and the ruins of Palmyra derive a casual splendour from the nakedness of the surrounding desert. Without injustice to his fame, I may discern some blemishes in the sanctity and greatness of the restorer of the Western empire. Of his moral

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Reign and
character of
Charle-
magne,
A. D.
867—814;

CHAP. virtues, chastity is not the most conspicuous⁹⁶:
 XLIX. but the public happiness could not be materially injured by his nine wives or concubines, the various indulgence of meaner or more transient amours, the multitude of his bastards whom he bestowed on the church, and the long celibacy and licentious manners of his daughters⁹⁷, whom the father was suspected of loving with too fond a passion. I shall be scarcely permitted to accuse the ambition of a conqueror; but in a day of equal retribution, the sons of his brother Carloman, the Merovingian princes of Aquitain, and the four thousand five hundred Saxons who were beheaded on the same spot, would have something to allege against the justice and humanity of Charlemagne. His treatment of the vanquished Saxons⁹⁸ was an abuse of the right of conquest; his laws were not less sanguinary than his arms, and in the discussion of his motives, whatever is subtracted from bigotry must be imputed to temper. The sedentary reader is amazed by his incessant activity of mind and body; and his subjects and enemies were not less astonished at his sudden presence, at the moment when they believed him at the most distant extremity of the empire; neither peace nor war, nor summer nor winter, were a season of repose; and our fancy cannot easily reconcile the annals of his reign with the geography of his expeditions. But this activity was a national rather than a personal virtue; the vagrant life of a Frank was spent in the chace, in pilgrimage, in military adventures; and the

journies of Charlemagne were distinguished only by a more numerous train and a more important purpose. His military renown must be tried by the scrutiny of his troops, his enemies, and his actions. Alexander conquered with the arms of Philip, but the *two* heroes who preceded Charlemagne, bequeathed him their name, their examples, and the companions of their victories. At the head of his veteran and superior armies, he oppressed the savage or degenerate nations, who were incapable of confederating for their common safety: nor did he ever encounter an equal antagonist in numbers, in discipline, or in arms. The science of war has been lost and revived with the arts of peace; but his campaigns are not illustrated by any siege or battle, of singular difficulty and success; and he might behold, with envy, the Saracen trophies of his grand-father. After his Spanish expedition, his rear-guard was defeated in the Pyrenæan mountains; and the soldiers, whose situation was irretrievable and whose valour was useless, might accuse, with their last breath, the want of skill or caution of their general⁹⁹. I touch with reverence the laws of Charlemagne, so highly applauded by a respectable judge. They compose not a system, but a series, of occasional and minute edicts, for the correction of abuses, the reformation of manners, the œconomy of his farms, the care of his poultry, and even the sale of his eggs. He wished to improve the laws and the character of the Franks; and his attempts, however feeble and imperfect, are

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deserving of praise: the inveterate evils of the times were suspended or mollified by his government ¹⁰⁰; but in his institutions I can seldom discover the general views and the immortal spirit of a legislator, who survives himself for the benefit of posterity. The union and stability of his empire depended on the life of a single man: he imitated the dangerous practice of dividing his kingdoms among his sons; and, after his numerous diets, the whole constitution was left to fluctuate between the disorders of anarchy and despotism. His esteem for the piety and knowledge of the clergy tempted him to entrust that aspiring order with temporal dominion and civil jurisdiction; and his son Lewis, when he was stripped and degraded by the bishops, might accuse, in some measure, the imprudence of his father. His laws enforced the imposition of tythes, because the dæmons had proclaimed in the air that the default of payment had been the cause of the last scarcity ¹⁰¹. The literary merits of Charlemagne are attested by the foundation of schools, the introduction of arts, the works which were published in his name, and his familiar connection with the subjects and strangers whom he invited to his court to educate both the prince and people. His own studies were tardy, laborious, and imperfect; if he spoke Latin, and understood Greek, he derived the rudiments of knowledge from conversation, rather than from books; and, in his mature age, the emperor strove to acquire the practice of writing, which

every peasant now learns in his infancy ¹⁰². The grammar and logic, the music and astronomy, of the times, were only cultivated as the handmaids of superstition; but the curiosity of the human mind must ultimately tend to its improvement, and the encouragement of learning reflects the purest and most pleasing lustre on the character of Charlemagne ¹⁰³. The dignity of his person ¹⁰⁴, the length of his reign, the prosperity of his arms, the vigour of his government, and the reverence of distant nations, distinguish him from the royal crowd; and Europe dates a new æra from his restoration of the Western empire.

That empire was not unworthy of its title ¹⁰⁵; and some of the fairest kingdoms of Europe were the patrimony or conquest of a prince, who reigned at the same time in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary ¹⁰⁶. I. The Roman province of Gaul had been transformed into the name and monarchy of FRANCE; but, in the decay of the Merovingian line, its limits were contracted by the independence of the *Britons* and the revolt of *Aquitain*. Charlemagne pursued, and confined, the *Britons* on the shores of the ocean; and that ferocious tribe, whose origin and language are so different from the French, was chastised by the imposition of tribute, hostages, and peace. After a long and evasive contest, the rebellion of the dukes of *Aquitain* was punished by the forfeiture of their province, their liberty, and their lives. Harsh and rigorous would have been such treatment of ambitious governors, who

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Extent of his
empire in
France,

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had too faithfully copied the mayors of the palace. But a recent discovery¹⁰⁷ has proved that these unhappy princes were the last and lawful heirs of the blood and sceptre of Clovis, a younger branch, from the brother of Dagobert, of the Merovingian house. Their ancient kingdom was reduced to the dutchy of Gascogne, to the counties of Fesenzac and Armagnac, at the foot of the Pyrenees: their race was propagated till the beginning of the sixteenth century; and, after surviving their Carlovingian tyrants, they were reserved to feel the injustice, or the favours, of a third dynasty. By the re-union of Aquitain, France was enlarged to its present boundaries, with the additions of the Netherlands and Spain, as far as the Rhine. II. The Saracens had been expelled from France by the grandfather and father of Charlemagne; but they still possessed the greatest part of SPAIN, from the rock of Gibraltar to the Pyrenees. Amidst their civil divisions, an Arabian emir of Saragossa implored his protection in the diet of Paderborn. Charlemagne undertook the expedition, restored the emir, and, without distinction of faith, impartially crushed the resistance of the Christians, and rewarded the obedience and service of the Mahometans. In his absence he instituted the *Spanish march*¹⁰⁸, which extended from the Pyrenees to the river Ebro: Barcelona was the residence of the French governor: he possessed the counties of *Roussillon* and *Catalonia*; and the infant kingdoms of *Navarre* and *Arragon* were subject to his jurisdiction. III. As

Spain,

Italy,

king of the Lombards, and patrician of Rome he reigned over the greatest part of ITALY¹⁰⁹, a tract of a thousand miles from the Alps to the borders of Calabria. The dutchy of *Beneventum*, a Lombard fief, had spread, at the expence of the Greeks, over the modern kingdom of Naples. But Arrechis, the reigning duke, refused to be included in the slavery of his country; assumed the independent title of prince; and opposed his sword to the Carlovingian monarchy. His defence was firm, his submission was not inglorious, and the emperor was content with an easy tribute, the demolition of his fortresses, and the acknowledgment, on his coins, of a supreme lord. The artful flattery of his son Grimoald added the appellation of father, but he asserted his dignity with prudence, and Beneventum insensibly escaped from the French yoke¹¹⁰. IV. Charlemagne Germany, was the first who united GERMANY under the same sceptre. The name of *Oriental France* is preserved in the circle of *Franconia*; and the people of *Hesse* and *Thuringia* were recently incorporated with the victors, by the conformity of religion and government. The *Alemanni*, so formidable to the Romans, were the faithful vassals and confederates of the Franks; and their country was inscribed within the modern limits of *Alsace*, *Swabia*, and *Switzerland*. The *Bavarians*, with a similar indulgence of their laws and manners, were less patient of a master: the repeated treasons of Tassilo justified the abolition of their hereditary dukes: and their power was shared among the

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counts, who judged and guarded that important frontier. But the north of Germany, from the Rhine and beyond the Elbe, was still hostile and Pagan; nor was it till after a war of thirty-three years that the Saxons bowed under the yoke of Christ and of Charlemagne. The idols and their votaries were extirpated: the foundation of eight bishoprics, of Munster, Osnaburgh, Paderborn, and Minden, of Bremen, Verden, Hildesheim, and Halberstadt, define, on either side of the Weser, the bounds of ancient Saxony; these episcopal seats were the first schools and cities of that savage land; and the religion and humanity of the children atoned, in some degree, for the massacre of the parents. Beyond the Elbe, the *Slavi*, or Slavonians, of similar manners and various denominations, overspread the modern dominions of Prussia, Poland, and Bohemia, and some transient marks of obedience have tempted the French historian to extend the empire to the Baltic and the Vistula. The conquest or conversion of those countries is of a more recent age; but the first union of *Bohemia* with the Germanic body may be justly ascribed to the arms of Charlemagne. V. He retaliated on the Avars, or Huns of Pannonia, the same calamities which they had inflicted on the nations. Their rings, the wooden fortifications which encircled their districts and villages, were broken down by the triple effort of a French army, that was poured into their country by land and water, through the Carpathian mountains, along the plain of the

Hungary,

Danube. After a bloody conflict of eight years, the loss of some French generals was avenged by the slaughter of the most noble Huns: the relics of the nation submitted: the royal residence of the chagan was left desolate and unknown; and the treasures, the rapine of two hundred and fifty years, enriched the victorious troops, or decorated the churches of Italy and Gaul¹¹. After the reduction of Pannonia, the empire of Charlemagne was bounded only by the conflux of the Danube with the Teyss and the Save: the provinces of Istria, Liburnia, and Dalmatia, were an easy, though unprofitable, accession; and it was an effect of his moderation, that he left the maritime cities under the real or nominal sovereignty of the Greeks. But these distant possessions added more to the reputation than to the power of the Latin emperor; nor did he risk any ecclesiastical foundations to reclaim the Barbarians from their vagrant life and idolatrous worship. Some canals of communication between the rivers, the Saône and the Meuse, the Rhine and the Danube, were faintly attempted¹². Their execution would have vivified the empire; and more cost and labour were often wasted in the structure of a cathedral.

If we retrace the outlines of this geographical picture, it will be seen that the empire of the Franks extended between east and west, from the Ebro to the Elbe or Vistula; between the north and south, from the dutchy of Beneventum to the river Eyder, the perpetual boundary of

His neigh-
bours and
enemies.

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Germany and Denmark. The personal and political importance of Charlemagne was magnified by the distress and division of the rest of Europe. The islands of Great Britain and Ireland were disputed by a crowd of princes of Saxon or Scottish origin; and, after the loss of Spain, the Christian and Gothic kingdom of Alphonso the chaste, was confined to the narrow range of the Asturian mountains. These petty sovereigns revered the power or virtue of the Carolingian monarch, implored the honour and support of his alliance, and styled him their common parent, the sole and supreme emperor of the West¹¹³. He maintained a more equal intercourse with the caliph Harun al Rashid¹¹⁴, whose dominion stretched from Africa to India, and accepted from his ambassadors a tent, a water-clock, an elephant, and the keys of the holy sepulchre. It is not easy to conceive the private friendship of a Frank and an Arab, who were strangers to each other's person, and language, and religion: but their public correspondence was founded on vanity, and their remote situation left no room for a competition of interest. Two-thirds of the Western empire of Rome were subject to Charlemagne, and the deficiency was amply supplied by his command of the inaccessible or invincible nations of Germany. But in the choice of his enemies, we may be reasonably surprised that he so often preferred the poverty of the north to the riches of the south. The three-and-thirty campaigns laboriously consumed in the woods and

morasses of Germany, would have sufficed to assert the amplitude of his title by the expulsion of the Greeks from Italy and the Saracens from Spain. The weakness of the Greeks would have ensured an easy victory; and the holy crusade against the Saracens would have been prompted by glory and revenge, and loudly justified by religion and policy. Perhaps, in his expeditions beyond the Rhine and the Elbe, he aspired to save his monarchy from the fate of the Roman empire, to disarm the enemies of civilized society, and to eradicate the seed of future emigrations. But it has been wisely observed, that in a light of precaution, all conquest must be ineffectual, unless it could be universal; since the encreasing circle must be involved in a larger sphere of hostility¹¹⁵. The subjugation of Germany withdrew the veil which had so long concealed the continent or islands of Scandinavia from the knowledge of Europe, and awakened the torpid courage of their barbarous natives. The fiercest of the Saxon idolaters escaped from the Christian tyrant to their brethren of the north; the Ocean and Mediterranean were covered with their piratical fleets; and Charlemagne beheld with a sigh the destructive progress of the Normans, who, in less than seventy years, precipitated the fall of his race and monarchy.

Had the pope and the Romans revived the primitive constitution, the titles of emperor and Augustus were conferred on Charlemagne for the term of his life; and his successors, on each

His successors.
A. D.
814—887
in Italy;

62 THE DECLINE AND FALL

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911 in Ger-
many; 987 in
France.

A. D. 813.

Lewis the
Pious,
A. D.
814—840.

Lothaire I.
A. D.
840—855.

vacancy, must have ascended the throne by a formal or tacit election. But the association of his son Lewis the Pious asserts the independent right of monarchy and conquest, and the emperor seems on this occasion to have foreseen and prevented the latent claims of the clergy. The royal youth was commanded to take the crown from the altar, and with his own hands to place it on his head, as a gift which he held from God, his father, and the nation¹¹⁶. The same ceremony was repeated, though with less energy, in the subsequent associations of Lothaire and Lewis the second; the Carolingian sceptre was transmitted from father to son in a lineal descent of four generations; and the ambition of the popes was reduced to the empty honour of crowning and anointing these hereditary princes who were already invested with their power and dominions. The pious Lewis survived his brothers, and embraced the whole empire of Charlemagne; but the nations and the nobles, his bishops and his children, quickly discerned that this mighty mass was no longer inspired by the same soul; and the foundations were undermined to the centre, while the external surface was yet fair and entire. After a war, or battle, which consumed one hundred thousand Franks, the empire was divided by treaty between his three sons, who had violated every filial and fraternal duty. The kingdoms of Germany and France were for ever separated; the provinces of Gaul, between the Rhone and the Alps, the Meuse and the Rhine,

were assigned, with Italy, to the Imperial dignity of Lothaire. In the partition of his share, Lorraine and Arles, two recent and transitory kingdoms, were bestowed on the younger children; and Lewis the second, his eldest son, was content with the realm of Italy, the proper and sufficient patrimony of a Roman emperor. On his death without any male issue, the vacant throne was disputed by his uncles and cousins, and the popes most dextrously seized the occasion of judging the claims and merits of the candidates, and of bestowing on the most obsequious or most liberal, the Imperial office of advocate of the Roman church. The dregs of the Carolingian race no longer exhibited any symptoms of virtue or power, and the ridiculous epithets of the *bald*, the *stammerer*, the *fat*, and the *simple*, distinguished the tame and uniform features of a crowd of kings alike deserving of oblivion. By the failure of the collateral branches, the whole inheritance devolved to Charles the Fat, the last emperor of his family: his insanity authorised the desertion of Germany, Italy, and France: he was deposed in a diet, and solicited his daily bread from the rebels, by whose contempt his life and liberty had been spared. According to the measure of their force, the governors, the bishops, and the lords, usurped the fragments of the falling empire; and some preference was shewn to the female or illegitimate blood of Charlemagne. Of the greater part, the title and possession were alike doubtful, and the

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Lewis II.
A. D.
856-875.

Division of
the empire,
A. D. 888.

C H A P. XLIX. merit was adequate to the contracted scale of their dominions. Those who could appear with an army at the gates of Rome were crowned emperors in the Vatican; but their modesty was more frequently satisfied with the appellation of kings of Italy: and the whole term of seventy-four years may be deemed a vacancy, from the abdication of Charles the Fat to the establishment of Otho the first.

Otho king of Germany restores and appropriates the Western empire, A. D. 962.

Otho ¹¹⁷ was of the noble race of the dukes of Saxony; and if he truly descended from Witi-kind, the adversary and proselyte of Charlemagne, the posterity of a vanquished people was exalted to reign over their conquerors. His father Henry the Fowler was elected, by the suffrage of the nation, to save and institute the kingdom of Germany. Its limits ¹¹⁸ were enlarged on every side by his son, the first and greatest of the Othos. A portion of Gaul to the West of the Rhine, along the banks of the Meuse and the Moselle, was assigned to the Germans, by whose blood and language it has been tinged since the time of Cæsar and Tacitus. Between the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Alps, the successors of Otho acquired a vain supremacy over the broken kingdoms of Burgundy and Arles. In the north. Christianity was propagated by the sword of Otho, the conqueror and apostle of the Slavic nations of the Elbe and Oder: the marches of Brandenburg and Sleswick were fortified with German colonies; and the king of Denmark, the dukes of Poland and Bohemia, confessed themselves

themselves his tributary vassals. At the head of a victorious army, he passed the Alps, subdued the kingdom of Italy, delivered the pope, and for ever fixed the Imperial crown in the name and nation of Germany. From that memorable æra, two maxims of public jurisprudence were introduced by force and ratified by time. I. *That* the prince, who was elected in the German diet, acquired from that instant the subject kingdoms of Italy and Rome. II. But that he might not legally assume the titles of emperor and Augustus, till he had received the crown from the hands of the Roman pontiff¹¹⁹.

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The Imperial dignity of Charlemagne was announced to the East by the alteration of his style; and instead of saluting his fathers, the Greek emperors, he presumed to adopt the more equal and familiar appellation of brother¹²⁰. Perhaps in his connection with Irene he aspired to the name of husband: his embassy to Constantinople spoke the language of peace and friendship, and might conceal a treaty of marriage with that ambitious princess, who had renounced the most sacred duties of a mother. The nature, the duration, the probable consequences of such an union between two distant and dissonant empires, it is impossible to conjecture; but the unanimous silence of the Latins may teach us to suspect, that the report was invented by the enemies of Irene, to charge her with the guilt of betraying the church and state to the strangers of the West¹²¹. The French ambassadors were the

Transactions
of the West-
ern and East-
ern empires.

C H A P. XLIX. spectators, and had nearly been the victims, of the conspiracy of Nicephorus, and the national hatred. Constantinople was exasperated by the treason and sacrilege of ancient Rome: a proverb, "That the Franks were good friends and bad neighbours," was in every one's mouth; but it was dangerous to provoke a neighbour who might be tempted to reiterate, in the church of St. Sophia, the ceremony of his Imperial coronation. After a tedious journey of circuit and delay, the ambassadors of Nicephorus found him in his camp, on the banks of the river Sala; and Charlemagne affected to confound their vanity by displaying, in a Franconian village, the pomp, or at least the pride, of the Byzantine palace¹²². The Greeks were successively led through four halls of audience: in the first they were ready to fall prostrate before a splendid personage in a chair of state, till he informed them that he was only a servant, the constable, or master of the horse of the emperor. The same mistake, and the same answer, were repeated in the apartments of the count palatine, the steward, and the chamberlain; and their impatience was gradually heightened, till the doors of the presence-chamber were thrown open, and they beheld the genuine monarch, on his throne, enriched with the foreign luxury which he despised, and encircled with the love and reverence of his victorious chiefs. A treaty of peace and alliance was concluded between the two empires, and the limits of the East and West

were defined by the right of present possession. But the Greeks ¹²³ soon forgot this humiliating equality, or remembered it only to hate the Barbarians by whom it was extorted. During the short union of virtue and power, they respectfully saluted the *august* Charlemagne, with the acclamations of *basileus*, and emperor of the Romans. As soon as these qualities were separated in the person of his pious son, the Byzantine letters were inscribed, "To the king, or, as he styles himself, the emperor of the Franks and Lombards." When both power and virtue were extinct, they despoiled Lewis the second of his hereditary title, and, with the barbarous appellation of *rex* or *regis*, degraded him among the crowd of Latin princes. His reply ¹²⁴ is expressive of his weakness: he proves, with some learning, that, both in sacred and profane history, the name of king is synonymous with the Greek word *basileus*: if, at Constantinople, it were assumed in a more exclusive and imperial sense, he claims from his ancestors, and from the pope, a just participation of the honours of the Roman purple. The same controversy was revived in the reign of the Othos; and their ambassador describes, in lively colours, the insolence of the Byzantine court ¹²⁵. The Greeks affected to despise the poverty and ignorance of the Franks and Saxons; and in their last decline, refused to prostitute to the kings of Germany the title of Roman emperors.

These emperors, in the election of the popes, Authority of

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 XLIX.
 the emperors
 in the elec-
 tions of the
 popes,
 A. D.
 800 — 1060.

continued to exercise the powers which had been assumed by the Gothic and Grecian princes; and the importance of this prerogative encreased with the temporal estate and spiritual jurisdiction of the Roman church. In the Christian aristocracy, the principal members of the clergy still formed a senate to assist the administration, and to supply the vacancy, of the bishop. Rome was divided into twenty-eight parishes, and each parish was governed by a cardinal-priest, or presbyter, a title which, however common and modest in its origin, has aspired to emulate the purple of kings. Their number was enlarged by the association of the seven deacons of the most considerable hospitals, the seven palatine judges of the Lateran, and some dignitaries of the church. This ecclesiastical senate was directed by the seven cardinal-bishops of the Roman province, who were less occupied in the suburb dioceses of Ostia, Porto, Velitræ, Tusculum, Præneste, Tibur, and the Sabines, than by their weekly service in the Lateran, and their superior share in the honours and authority of the apostolic see. On the death of the pope, these bishops recommended a successor to the suffrage of the college of cardinals¹²⁶, and their choice was ratified or rejected by the applause or clamour of the Roman people. But the election was imperfect; nor could the pontiff be legally consecrated till the emperor, the advocate of the church, had graciously signified his approbation and consent. The royal commissioner examined, on the

spot, the form and freedom of the proceedings; nor was it, till after a previous scrutiny into the qualifications of the candidates, that he accepted an oath of fidelity, and confirmed the donations which had successively enriched the patrimony of St. Peter. In the frequent schisms, the rival claims were submitted to the sentence of the emperor; and in a synod of bishops he presumed to judge, to condemn, and to punish, the crimes of a guilty pontiff. Otho the first imposed a treaty on the senate and people, who engaged to prefer the candidate most acceptable to his majesty¹²⁷: his successors anticipated or prevented their choice: they bestowed the Roman benefice, like the bishoprics of Cologne or Bamberg, on their chancellors or preceptors; and whatever might be the merit of a Frank or Saxon, his name sufficiently attests the interposition of foreign power. These acts of prerogative were most speciously excused by the vices of a popular election. The competitor who had been excluded by the cardinals, appealed to the passions or avarice of the multitude: the Vatican and the Lateran were stained with blood; and the most powerful senators, the marquises of Tuscany and the counts of Tusculum, held the apostolic see in a long and disgraceful servitude. The Roman pontiffs, of the ninth and tenth

Disorders.

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priest ¹²⁸. The influence of two sister prostitutes, Marozia, and Theodora, was founded on their wealth and beauty, their political and amorous intrigues: the most strenuous of their lovers were rewarded with the Roman mitre, and their reign ¹²⁹ may have suggested to the darker ages ¹³⁰ the fable ¹³¹ of a female pope ¹³². The bastard son, the grandson and the great-grandson of Marozia, a rare genealogy, were seated in the chair of St. Peter, and it was at the age of nineteen years that the second of these became the head of the Latin church. His youth and manhood were of a suitable complexion; and the nations of pilgrims could bear testimony to the charges that were urged against him in a Roman synod, and in the presence of Otho the great. As John XII. had renounced the dress and decencies of his profession, the *soldier* may not perhaps be dishonoured by the wine which he drank, the blood that he spilt, the flames that he kindled, or the licentious pursuits of gaming and hunting. His open simony might be the consequence of distress: and his blasphemous invocation of Jupiter and Venus, if it be true, could not possibly be serious. But we read with some surprise, that the worthy grandson of Marozia lived in public adultery with the matrons of Rome; that the Lateran palace was turned into a school for prostitution, and that his rapes of virgins and widows had deterred the female pilgrims from visiting the tomb of St. Peter, lest, in the devout act, they should be violated by his successor ¹³³. The protestants have dwelt with malicious pleasure

on these characters of anti-christ; but to a philosophic eye, the vices of the clergy are far less dangerous than their virtues. After a long series of scandal, the apostolic see was reformed and exalted by the austerity and zeal of Gregory VII. That ambitious monk devoted his life to the execution of two projects. I. To fix in the college of cardinals the freedom and independence of election, and for ever to abolish the right or usurpation of the emperors and the Roman people. II. To bestow and resume the Western empire as a fief or benefice¹³⁴ of the church, and to extend his temporal dominion over the kings and kingdoms of the earth. After a contest of fifty years, the first of these designs was accomplished by the firm support of the ecclesiastical order, whose liberty was connected with that of their chief. But the second attempt, though it was crowned with some partial and apparent success, has been vigorously resisted by the secular power, and finally extinguished by the improvement of human reason.

In the revival of the empire of Rome, neither the bishop nor the people could bestow on Charlemagne or Otho, the provinces which were lost, as they had been won, by the chance of arms. But the Romans were free to chuse a master for themselves; and the powers which had been delegated to the patrician, were irrevocably granted to the French and Saxon emperors of the West. The broken records of the times¹³⁵ preserve some remembrance of their palace, their mint, their tribunal, their edicts, and the sword of justice.

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Reformation
and claims of
the church,
A. D. 1073,
&c.

Authority of
the emperors
in Rome.

C H A P. which, as late as the thirteenth century, was
 XLIX. derived from Cæsar to the præfect of the city ¹³⁶.
 Between the arts of the popes and the violence of
 the people, this supremacy was crushed and
 annihilated. Content with the titles of emperor
 and Augustus, the successors of Charlemagne
 neglected to assert this local jurisdiction. In the
 hour of prosperity, their ambition was diverted
 by more alluring objects; and in the decay and
 division of the empire, they were oppressed by
 the defence of their hereditary provinces. Amidst
 the ruins of Italy, the famous Marozia invited
 one of the usurpers to assume the character of
 her third husband; and Hugh, king of Burgundy,
 was introduced by her faction into the mole
 of Hadrian or castle of St. Angelo, which
 commands the principal bridge and entrance of
 Rome. Her son by the first marriage, Alberic,
 was compelled to attend at the nuptial banquet;
 but his reluctant and ungraceful service was
 chastised with a blow by his new father. The
 blow was productive of a revolution. "Romans,"
 exclaimed the youth, "once you were the mas-
 "ters of the world, and these Burgundians the
 "most abject of your slaves. They now reign,
 "these voracious and brutal savages, and my
 "injury is the commencement of your servi-
 "tude ¹³⁷." The alarm-bell rung to arms in
 every quarter of the city: the Burgundians
 retreated with haste and shame; Marozia was
 imprisoned by her victorious son; and his bro-
 ther, pope John XI. was reduced to the exercise

Revolt of
 Alberic,
 A. D. 932,

of his spiritual functions. With the title of prince, Alberic possessed above twenty years the government of Rome, and he is said to have gratified the popular prejudice, by restoring the office, or at least the title, of consuls and tribunes. His son and heir Octavian assumed, with the pontificate, the name of John XII; like his predecessor, he was provoked by the Lombard princes to seek a deliverer for the church and republic; and the services of Otho were rewarded with the Imperial dignity. But the Saxon was imperious, the Romans were impatient, the festival of the coronation was disturbed by the secret conflict of prerogative and freedom, and Otho commanded his sword-bearer not to stir from his person, lest he should be assaulted and murdered at the foot of the altar ¹³⁸. Before he repassed the Alps, the emperor chastised the revolt of the people and the ingratitude of John XII. The pope was degraded in a synod; the præfect was mounted on an ass, whipped through the city and cast into a dungeon; thirteen of the most guilty were hanged, others were mutilated or banished; and this severe process was justified by the ancient laws of Theodosius and Justinian. The voice of fame has accused the second Otho of a perfidious and bloody act, the massacre of the senators, whom he had invited to his table under the fair semblance of hospitality and friendship ¹³⁹. In the minority of his son Otho the third, Rome made a bold attempt to shake off the Saxon yoke,

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Of pope
John XII.
A. D. 967.

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Of the consul Crescentius,

A. D. 998.

and the consul Crescentius was the Brutus of the republic. From the condition of a subject and an exile, he twice rose to the command of the city, oppressed, expelled, and created the popes, and formed a conspiracy for restoring the authority of the Greek emperors. In the fortrefs. of St. Angelo, he maintained an obstinate siege, till the unfortunate consul was betrayed by a promise of safety: his body was suspended on a gibbet, and his head was exposed on the battlements of the castle. By a reverse of fortune, Otho, after separating his troops, was besieged three days, without food, in his palace; and a disgraceful escape saved him from the justice or fury of the Romans. The senator Ptolemy was the leader of the people, and the widow of Crescentius enjoyed the pleasure or the fame of revenging her husband, by a poison which she administered to her Imperial lover. It was the design of Otho the third to abandon the ruder countries of the north, to erect his throne in Italy, and to revive the institutions of the Roman monarchy. But his successors only once in their lives appeared on the banks of the Tyber, to receive their crown in the Vatican ¹⁴⁰. Their absence was contemptible, their presence odious and formidable. They descended from the Alps, at the head of their Barbarians, who were strangers and enemies to the country; and their transient visit was a scene of tumult and bloodshed ¹⁴¹. A faint remembrance of their ancestors still tormented the Romans; and they beheld

with pious indignation the succession of Saxons, Franks, Swabians, and Bohemians, who usurped the purple and prerogatives of the Cæsars.

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There is nothing perhaps more adverse to nature and reason than to hold in obedience remote countries and foreign nations, in opposition to their inclination and interest. A torrent of Barbarians may pass over the earth, but an extensive empire must be supported by a refined system of policy and oppression: in the centre, an absolute power, prompt in action, and rich in resources: a swift and easy communication with the extreme parts: fortifications to check the first effort of rebellion: a regular administration to protect and punish; and a well-disciplined army to inspire fear, without provoking discontent and despair. Far different was the situation of the German Cæsars, who were ambitious to enslave the kingdom of Italy. Their patrimonial estates were stretched along the Rhine, or scattered in the provinces; but this ample domain was alienated by the imprudence or distress of successive princes; and their revenue, from minute and vexatious prerogative, was scarcely sufficient for the maintenance of their household. Their troops were formed by the legal or voluntary service of their feudal vassals, who passed the Alps with reluctance, assumed the licence of rapine and disorder, and capriciously deserted before the end of the campaign. Whole armies were swept away by the pestilential influence of the climate; the survivors brought back the bones of their

The kingdom of Italy,
A. D.

774—1250.

CHAP. princes and nobles ¹⁴², and the effects of their
 XLIX. own intemperance were often imputed to the
 treachery and malice of the Italians, who rejoiced
 at least in the calamities of the Barbarians. This
 irregular tyranny might contend on equal terms
 with the petty tyrants of Italy; nor can the
 people, or the reader, be much interested in the
 event of the quarrel. But in the eleventh and
 twelfth centuries, the Lombards rekindled the
 flame of industry and freedom; and the generous
 example was at length imitated by the republics
 of Tuscany. In the Italian cities a municipal
 government had never been totally abolished;
 and their first privileges were granted by the
 favour and policy of the emperors, who were
 desirous of erecting a plebeian barrier against the
 independence of the nobles. But their rapid
 progress, the daily extension of their power and
 pretensions, were founded on the numbers and
 spirit of these rising communities ¹⁴³. Each city
 filled the measure of her diocese or district: the
 jurisdiction of the counts, and bishops, of the
 marquisses and counts, was banished from the
 land; and the proudest nobles were persuaded or
 compelled to desert their solitary castles, and to
 embrace the more honourable character of freemen
 and magistrates. The legislative authority was
 inherent in the general assembly; but the execu-
 tive powers were entrusted to three consuls, an-
 nually chosen from the three orders of *captains*,
valvassors ¹⁴⁴, and *commons*, into which the re-
 public was divided. Under the protection of

equal law, the labours of agriculture and commerce were gradually revived; but the martial spirit of the Lombards was nourished by the presence of danger; and as often as the bell was rung, or the standard¹⁴⁵ erected, the gates of the city poured forth a numerous and intrepid band, whose zeal in their own cause was soon guided by the use and discipline of arms. At the foot of these popular ramparts, the pride of the Cæsars was overthrown; and the invincible genius of liberty prevailed over the two Frederics, the greatest princes of the middle age: the first, superior perhaps in military prowess; the second, who undoubtedly excelled in the softer accomplishments of peace and learning.

Ambitious of restoring the splendour of the purple, Frederic the first invaded the republics of Lombardy, with the arts of a statesman, the valour of a soldier, and the cruelty of a tyrant. The recent discovery of the Pandects had renewed a science most favourable to despotism; and his venal advocates proclaimed the emperor the absolute master of the lives and properties of his subjects. His royal prerogatives, in a less odious sense, were acknowledged in the diet of Roncaglia; and the revenue of Italy was fixed at thirty thousand pounds of silver¹⁴⁶, which were multiplied to an indefinite demand, by the rapine of the fiscal officers. The obstinate cities were reduced by the terror or the force of his arms: his captives were delivered to the executioner, or shot from his military engines; and, after the

Frederic the
first,
A. D.
1152—1190.

CHAP. XLIX. siege and surrender of Milan, the buildings of that stately capital were razed to the ground, three hundred hostages were sent into Germany, and the inhabitants were dispersed in four villages, under the yoke of the inflexible conqueror.¹⁴⁷ But Milan soon rose from her ashes; and the league of Lombardy was cemented by distress: their cause was espoused by Venice, pope Alexander the third, and the Greek emperor: the fabric of oppression was overturned in a day; and in the treaty of Constance, Frederic subscribed, with some reservations, the freedom of four-and-twenty cities. His grandson contended with their vigour and maturity; but Frederic the second¹⁴⁸ was endowed with some personal and peculiar advantages. His birth and education recommended him to the Italians; and in the implacable discord of the two factions, the Ghibelins were attached to the emperor, while the Guelfs displayed the banner of liberty and the church. The court of Rome had slumbered, when his father Henry the sixth was permitted to unite with the empire the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily; and from these hereditary realms, the son derived an ample and ready supply of troops and treasure. Yet Frederic the second was finally oppressed by the arms of the Lombards and the thunders of the Vatican; his kingdom was given to a stranger, and the last of his family was beheaded at Naples on a public scaffold. During sixty years, no emperor appeared in Italy, and the name was remembered only by the ignominious sale of the last relics of sovereignty.

Frederic the second,

A. D.

1198—1250.

The Barbarian conquerors of the West were pleased to decorate their chief with the title of emperor; but it was not their design to invest him with the despotism of Constantine and Justinian. The persons of the Germans were free, their conquests were their own, and their national character was animated by a spirit which scorned the servile jurisprudence of the new or the ancient Rome. It would have been a vain and dangerous attempt to impose a monarch, on the armed freemen who were impatient of a magistrate; on the bold, who refused to obey; on the powerful, who aspired to command. The empire of Charlemagne and Otho was distributed among the dukes of the nations or provinces, the counts of the smaller districts, and the margraves of the marches or frontiers, who all united the civil and military authority as it had been delegated to the lieutenants of the first Cæsars. The Roman governors, who, for the most part, were soldiers of fortune, seduced their mercenary legions, assumed the Imperial purple, and either failed or succeeded in their revolt, without wounding the power and unity of government. If the dukes, margraves, and counts of Germany, were less audacious in their claims, the consequences of their success were more lasting and pernicious to the state. Instead of aiming at the supreme rank, they silently laboured to establish and appropriate their provincial independence. Their ambition was seconded by the weight of their estates and vassals, their mutual example

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Independence of the
princes of

Germany,

A. D.

814—1250,

&c.

C H A P. and support, the common interest of the subor-
 XLIX. dinate nobility, the change of princes and fami-
 lies, the minorities of Otho the third and Henry
 the fourth, the ambition of the popes, and the
 vain pursuit of the fugitive crowns of Italy and
 Rome. All the attributes of regal and territorial
 jurisdiction were gradually usurped by the com-
 manders of the provinces; the right of peace and
 war, of life and death, of coinage and taxation,
 of foreign alliance and domestic œconomy.
 Whatever had been seized by violence, was ra-
 tified by favour or distress and was granted as the
 price of a doubtful vote or a voluntary service;
 whatever had been granted to one, could not,
 without injury, be denied to his successor or
 equal; and every act of local or temporary pos-
 session was insensibly moulded into the constitu-
 tion of the Germanic kingdom. In every pro-
 vince, the visible presence of the duke or count
 was interposed between the throne and the nobles;
 the subjects of the law became the vassals of a
 private chief; and the standard, which *he* receiv-
 ed from his sovereign, was often raised against
 him in the field. The temporal power of the
 clergy was cherished and exalted by the super-
 stition or policy of the Carlovingian and Saxon
 dynasties, who blindly depended on their mo-
 deration and fidelity; and the bishoprics of Ger-
 many were made equal in extent and privilege,
 superior in wealth and population, to the most
 ample states of the military order. As long as
 the emperors retained the prerogative of bestowing
 on

on every vacancy these ecclesiastic and secular benefices, their cause was maintained by the gratitude or ambition of their friends and favourites. But in the quarrel of the investitures, they were deprived of their influence over the episcopal chapters; the freedom of election was restored, and the sovereign was reduced, by a solemn mockery, to his *first prayers*, the recommendation, once in his reign, to a single prebend in each church. The secular governors, instead of being recalled at the will of a superior, could be degraded only by the sentence of their peers. In the first age of the monarchy, the appointment of the son to the duchy or county of his father, was solicited as a favour; it was gradually obtained as a custom, and extorted as a right: the lineal succession was often extended to the collateral or female branches; the states of the empire (their popular, and at length their legal, appellation) were divided and alienated by testament and sale; and all idea of a public trust was lost in that of a private and perpetual inheritance. The emperor could not even be enriched by the casualties of forfeiture and extinction: within the term of a year, he was obliged to dispose of the vacant fief, and in the choice of the candidate it was his duty to consult either the general or the provincial diet.

After the death of Frederic the second, Germany was left a monster with an hundred heads. A crowd of princes and prelates disputed the ruins of the empire: the lords of innumerable

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The Germanic constitution,
A. D. 1250.

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XLIX.

castles were less prone to obey, than to imitate, their superiors; and according to the measure of their strength, their incessant hostilities received the names of conquest or robbery. Such anarchy was the inevitable consequence of the laws and manners of Europe; and the kingdoms of France and Italy were shivered into fragments by the violence of the same tempest. But the Italian cities and the French vassals were divided and destroyed, while the union of the Germans has produced, under the name of an empire, a great system of a fœderative republic. In the frequent and at last the perpetual institution of diets, a national spirit was kept alive, and the powers of a common legislature are still exercised by the three branches or colleges of the electors, the princes, and the free and Imperial cities of Germany. I. Seven of the most powerful feudataries were permitted to assume, with a distinguished name and rank, the exclusive privilege of choosing the Roman emperor; and these electors were the king of Bohemia, the duke of Saxony, the margrave of Brandenburg, the count palatine of the Rhine, and the three archbishops of Mentz, of Treves, and of Cologne. II. The college of princes and prelates purged themselves of a promiscuous multitude: they reduced to four representative votes, the long series of independent counts, and excluded the nobles or equestrian order, sixty thousand of whom, as in the Polish diets, had appeared on horseback in the field of election. III. The pride of birth and dominion,

of the sword and the mitre, wisely adopted the commons as the third branch of the legislature, and, in the progress of society, they were introduced about the same æra into the national assemblies of France, England, and Germany. The Hanseatic league commanded the trade and navigation of the north: the confederates of the Rhine secured the peace and intercourse of the inland country: the influence of the cities has been adequate to their wealth and policy, and their negative still invalidates the acts of the two superior colleges of electors and princes ¹⁴⁹.

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It is in the fourteenth century, that we may view in the strongest light the state and contrast of the Roman empire of Germany, which no longer held, except on the borders of the Rhine and Danube, a single province of Trajan or Constantine. Their unworthy successors were the counts of Habsburgh, of Nassau, of Luxemburgh, and of Schwartzzenburgh: the emperor Henry the seventh procured for his son the crown of Bohemia, and his grandson Charles the fourth was born among a people, strange and barbarous in the estimation of the Germans themselves ¹⁵⁰. After the excommunication of Lewis of Bavaria, he received the gift or promise of the vacant empire from the Roman pontiffs, who, in the exile and captivity of Avignon, affected the dominion of the earth. The death of his competitors united the electoral college, and Charles was unanimously saluted king of the Romans, and future emperor: a title which in the same

Weakness
and poverty
of the Ger-
man emperor
Charles IV.
A. D.
1347—1378.

C H A P.
XLIX.

A. D. 1355.

age was prostituted to the Cæsars of Germany and Greece. The German emperor was no more than the elective and impotent magistrate of an aristocracy of princes, who had not left him a village that he might call his own. His best prerogative was the right of presiding and proposing in the national senate, which was convened at his summons; and his native kingdom of Bohemia, less opulent than the adjacent city of Nurembergh, was the firmest seat of his power and the richest source of his revenue. The army with which he passed the Alps, consisted of three hundred horse. In the cathedral of St. Ambrose, Charles was crowned with the *iron* crown, which tradition ascribed to the Lombard monarchy; but he was admitted only with a peaceful train; the gates of the city were shut upon him; and the king of Italy was held a captive by the arms of the Visconti, whom he confirmed in the sovereignty of Milan. In the Vatican he was again crowned with the *golden* crown of the empire; but, in obedience to a secret treaty, the Roman emperor immediately withdrew, without reposing a single night within the walls of Rome. The eloquent Petrarch¹⁵, whose fancy revived the visionary glories of the Capitol, deploras and upbraids the ignominious flight of the Bohemian; and even his contemporaries could observe, that the sole exercise of his authority was in the lucrative sale of privileges and titles. The gold of Italy secured the election of his son; but such was the shameful poverty of the Roman

emperor, that his person was arrested by a butcher in the streets of Worms, and was detained in the public inn, as a pledge or hostage for the payment of his expences.

From this humiliating scene, let us turn to the apparent majesty of the same Charles in the diets of the empire. The golden bull, which fixes the Germanic constitution, is promulgated in the style of a sovereign and legislator. An hundred princes bowed before his throne, and exalted their own dignity by the voluntary honours which they yielded to their chief or minister. At the royal banquet, the hereditary great officers, the seven electors, who in rank and title were equal to kings, performed their solemn and domestic service of the palace. The seals of the triple kingdom were borne in state by the archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, and Treves, the perpetual arch-chancellors of Germany, Italy, and Arles. The great marshal, on horseback, exercised his function with a silver measure of oats, which he emptied on the ground, and immediately dismounted to regulate the order of the guests. The great steward, the count palatine of the Rhine, placed the dishes on the table. The great chamberlain, the margrave of Brandenburg, presented, after the repast, the golden ewer and basin, to wash. The king of Bohemia, as great cup-bearer, was represented by the emperor's brother, the duke of Luxemburgh and Brabant; and the procession was closed by the great huntsmen, who introduced a boar

C H A P.

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His ostenta-
tion.

A. D. 1356.

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and a flag, with a loud chorus of horns and hounds¹⁵². Nor was the supremacy of the emperor confined to Germany alone: the hereditary monarchs of Europe confessed the pre-eminence of his rank and dignity: he was the first of the Christian princes, the temporal head of the great republic of the West¹⁵³: to his person the title of majesty was long appropriated; and he disputed with the pope the sublime prerogative of creating kings and assembling councils. The oracle of the civil law, the learned Bartolus, was a pensioner of Charles the fourth; and his school refounded with the doctrine, that the Roman emperor was the rightful sovereign of the earth, from the rising to the setting sun. The contrary opinion was condemned, not as an error, but as an heresy, since even the gospel had pronounced, “And there went forth a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that *all the world* should be taxed¹⁵⁴.”

Contrast of
the power
and modesty
of Augustus.

If we annihilate the interval of time and space between Augustus and Charles, strong and striking will be the contrast between the two Cæsars; the Bohemian, who concealed his weakness under the mask of ostentation, and the Roman, who disguised his strength under the semblance of modesty. At the head of his victorious legions, in his reign over the sea and land, from the Nile and Euphrates to the Atlantic ocean, Augustus professed himself the servant of the state and the equal of his fellow-citizens. The conqueror of Rome and her provinces assumed the popular

and legal form of a censor, a consul, and a CHAP.
tribune. His will was the law of mankind, but XLIX.
in the declaration of his laws he borrowed the
voice of the senate and people; and, from their
decrees, their master accepted and renewed his
temporary commission to administer the republic.
In his dress, his domestics¹⁵⁵, his titles, in all
the offices of social life, Augustus maintained
the character of a private Roman; and his most
artful flatterers respected the secret of his absolute
and perpetual monarchy.

C H A P. L.

Description of Arabia and its Inhabitants. — Birth, Character, and Doctrine of Mahomet. — He preaches at Mecca. — Flies to Medina. — Propagates his Religion by the Sword. — Voluntary or reluctant Submission of the Arabs. — His Death and Successors. — The Claims and Fortunes of Ali and his Descendants.

C H A P. L. **A**FTER pursuing above six hundred years the fleeting Cæsars of Constantinople and Germany, I now descend, in the reign of Heraclius, on the eastern borders of the Greek monarchy. While the state was exhausted by the Persian war, and the church was distracted by the Nestorian and Monophysite sects, Mahomet, with the sword in one hand and the koran in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity and of Rome. The genius of the Arabian prophet, the manners of his nation, and the spirit of his religion, involve the causes of the decline and fall of the Eastern empire; and our eyes are curiously intent on one of the most memorable revolutions, which have impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the globe¹.

In the vacant space between Persia, Syria, Egypt, and Æthiopia, the Arabian peninsula² may be conceived as a triangle of spacious but irregular dimensions. From the northern point of Beles³ on the Euphrates, a line of fifteen hundred miles is terminated by the streights of Babelmandel and the land of frankincense. About half this length may be allowed for the middle breadth, from east to west, from Bassora to Suez, from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea⁴. The sides of the triangle are gradually enlarged, and the southern basis presents a front of a thousand miles to the Indian ocean. The entire surface of the peninsula exceeds in a fourfold proportion that of Germany or France; but the far greater part has been justly stigmatised with the epithets of the *stony* and the *sandy*. Even the wilds of Tartary are decked, by the hand of nature, with lofty trees and luxuriant herbage; and the lone-some traveller derives a sort of comfort and society from the presence of vegetable life. But in the dreary waste of Arabia, a boundless level of sand is intersected by sharp and naked mountains; and the face of the desert, without shade or shelter, is scorched by the direct and intense rays of a tropical sun. Instead of refreshing breezes, the winds, particularly from the south-west, diffuse a noxious and even deadly vapour; the hillocks of sand which they alternately raise and scatter, are compared to the billows of the ocean, and whole caravans, whole armies, have been lost and buried in the whirlwind. The common

C H A P.

L.

Description
of Arabia.

The soil and
climate.

CHAP. benefits of water are an object of desire and contest;
 L. and such is the scarcity of wood, that some art is requisite to preserve and propagate the element of fire. Arabia is destitute of navigable rivers, which fertilize the soil, and convey its produce to the adjacent regions: the torrents that fall from the hills are imbibed by the thirsty earth: the rare and hardy plants, the tamarind or the acacia, that strike their roots into the clefts of the rocks, are nourished by the dews of the night: a scanty supply of rain is collected in cisterns and aqueducts: the wells and springs are the secret treasure of the desert; and the pilgrim of Mecca', after many a dry and sultry march, is disgusted by the taste of the waters, which have rolled over a bed of sulphur or salt. Such is the general and genuine picture of the climate of Arabia. The experience of evil enhances the value of any local or partial enjoyments. A shady grove, a green pasture, a stream of fresh water, are sufficient to attract a colony of sedentary Arabs to the fortunate spots which can afford food and refreshment to themselves and their cattle, and which encourage their industry in the cultivation of the palm-tree and the vine. The high lands that border on the Indian ocean are distinguished by their superior plenty of wood and water: the air is more temperate, the fruits are more delicious, the animals and the human race more numerous; the fertility of the soil invites and rewards the toil of the husbandman; and the peculiar gifts of frankincense^c and coffee

have attracted in different ages the merchants of the world. If it be compared with the rest of the peninsula, this sequestered region may truly deserve the appellation of the *happy*; and the splendid colouring of fancy and fiction has been suggested by contrast and countenanced by distance. It was for this earthly paradise that nature had reserved her choicest favours and her most curious workmanship: the incompatible blessings of luxury and innocence were ascribed to the natives: the soil was impregnated with gold⁷ and gems, and both the land and sea were taught to exhale the odours of aromatic sweets. This division of the *sandy*, the *stony*, and the *happy*, so familiar to the Greeks and Latins, is unknown to the Arabians themselves; and it is singular enough, that a country, whose language and inhabitants have ever been the same, should scarcely retain a vestige of its ancient geography. The maritime districts of *Bahrein* and *Oman* are opposite to the realm of Persia. The kingdom of *Yemen* displays the limits, or at least the situation, of Arabia Fœlix: the name of *Neged* is extended over the inland space; and the birth of Mahomet has illustrated the province of *Hejaz* along the coast of the Red Sea⁸.

C H A P.
L.

Division of
the sandy,
the stony, and
the happy,
Arabia.

The measure of population is regulated by the means of subsistence; and the inhabitants of this vast peninsula might be out-numbered by the subjects of a fertile and industrious province. Along the shores of the Persian gulf, of the ocean, and even of the Red Sea, the *Iæthyophagi*⁹, or fish-eaters, continued to wander in quest of their

Manners of
the Bedo-
weens, or
pastoral
Arabs.

C H A P.

L.

precarious food. In this primitive and abject state, which ill deserves the name of society, the human brute, without arts or laws, almost without sense or language, is poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation. Generations and ages might roll away in silent oblivion, and the helpless savage was restrained from multiplying his race, by the wants and pursuits which confined his existence to the narrow margin of the sea-coast. But in an early period of antiquity the great body of the Arabs had emerged from this scene of misery; and as the naked wilderness could not maintain a people of hunters, they rose at once to the more secure and plentiful condition of the pastoral life. The same life is uniformly pursued by the roving tribes of the desert, and in the portrait of the modern *Bedouens*, we may trace the features of their ancestors¹⁰, who, in the age of Moses or Mahomet, dwelt under similar tents, and conducted their horses, and camels, and sheep, to the same springs and the same pastures. Our toil is lessened, and our wealth is encreased, by our dominion over the useful animals; and the Arabian shepherd had acquired the absolute possession of a faithful friend and a laborious slave¹¹. Arabia, in the opinion of the naturalist, is the genuine and original country of the *horse*; the climate most propitious, not indeed to the size, but to the spirit and swiftness, of that generous animal. The merit of the Barb, the Spanish, and the English breed, is derived from a mixture of

The horse.

Arabian blood¹²: the Bedoweens preserve, with superstitious care, the honours and the memory of the purest race: the males are sold at a high price, but the females are seldom alienated: and the birth of a noble foal was esteemed, among the tribes, as a subject of joy and mutual congratulation. These horses are educated in the tents, among the children of the Arabs, with a tender familiarity, which trains them in the habits of gentleness and attachment. They are accustomed only to walk and to gallop: their sensations are not blunted by the incessant abuse of the spur and the whip: their powers are reserved for the moments of flight and pursuit; but no sooner do they feel the touch of the hand or the stirrup, than they dart away with the swiftness of the wind; and if their friend be dismounted in the rapid career, they instantly stop till he has recovered his seat. In the sands of Afric and Arabia, the *camel* is a sacred and precious gift. That strong and patient beast of burthen can perform, without eating or drinking, a journey of several days; and a reservoir of fresh water is preserved in a large bag, a fifth stomach of the animal, whose body is imprinted with the marks of servitude: the larger breed is capable of transporting a weight of a thousand pounds; and the dromedary, of a lighter and more active frame, outstrips the fleetest courser in the race. Alive or dead, almost every part of the camel is serviceable to man: her milk is plentiful and nutritious: the young and tender flesh has the taste

The camel.

of veal ¹³: a valuable salt is extracted from the urine: the dung supplies the deficiency of fuel; and the long hair, which falls each year and is renewed, is coarsely manufactured into the garments, the furniture, and the tents, of the Bedoweens. In the rainy seasons they consume the rare and insufficient herbage of the desert: during the heats of summer and the scarcity of winter, they remove their encampments to the sea-coast, the hills of Yemen, or the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, and have often extorted the dangerous licence of visiting the banks of the Nile, and the villages of Syria and Palestine. The life of a wandering Arab is a life of danger and distress; and though sometimes, by rapine or exchange, he may appropriate the fruits of industry, a private citizen in Europe is in the possession of more solid and pleasing luxury than the proudest emir, who marches in the field at the head of ten thousand horse.

Cities of Arabia:

Yet an essential difference may be found between the hords of Scythia and the Arabian tribes, since many of the latter were collected into towns, and employed in the labours of trade and agriculture. A part of their time and industry was still devoted to the management of their cattle: they mingled, in peace and war, with their brethren of the desert; and the Bedoweens derived from their useful intercourse, some supply of their wants, and some rudiments of art and knowledge. Among the forty-two cities of Arabia ¹⁴, enumerated by Abulfeda, the most ancient

and populous were situate in the *happy* Yemen: C H A P.
the towers of Saana ¹⁵, and the marvellous re- L.
servoir of Merab ¹⁶, were constructed by the
kings of the Homerites; but their profane lustre
was eclipsed by the prophetic glories of MEDI-
NA ¹⁷ and MECCA ¹⁸, near the Red Sea, and at
the distance from each other of two hundred and
seventy miles. The last of these holy places was Mecca;
known to the Greeks under the name of Maco-
raba; and the termination of the word is expres-
sive of its greatness, which has not indeed, in
the most flourishing period, exceeded the size
and populousness of Marseilles. Some latent mo-
tive, perhaps of superstition, must have impelled
the founders, in the choice of a most unpromising
situation. They erected their habitations of mud
or stone, in a plain about two miles long and
one mile broad, at the foot of three barren
mountains: the soil is a rock; the water even of
the holy well of Zemzem is bitter or brackish;
the pastures are remote from the city; and grapes
are transported above seventy miles from the
gardens of Tayef. The fame and spirit of the
Koreishites, who reigned in Mecca, were con-
spicuous among the Arabian tribes; but their
ungrateful soil refused the labours of agriculture,
and their position was favourable to the enterprises
of trade. By the sea-port of Gedda, at the dis- her trade.
tance only of forty miles, they maintained an
easy correspondence with Abyssinia; and that
Christian kingdom afforded the first refuge to the
disciples of Mahomet. The treasures of Africa

C H A P. I. were conveyed over the peninsula to Gerrha or Katif, in the province of Bahrein, a city built, as it is said, of rock-salt, by the Chaldean exiles¹⁹: and from thence, with the native pearls of the Persian Gulf, they were floated on rafts to the mouth of the Euphrates. Mecca is placed almost at an equal distance, a month's journey, between Yemen on the right, and Syria on the left hand. The former was the winter, the latter the summer, station of her caravans; and their seasonable arrival relieved the ships of India from the tedious and troublesome navigation of the Red Sea. In the markets of Saana and Merab, in the harbours of Oman and Aden, the camels of the Koreishites were laden with a precious cargo of aromatics; a supply of corn and manufactures was purchased in the fairs of Bosra and Damascus; the lucrative exchange diffused plenty and riches in the streets of Mecca; and the noblest of her sons united the love of arms with the profession of merchandise²⁰.

National independence
of the Arabs.

The perpetual independence of the Arabs has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives; and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle, in favour of the posterity of Ismael²¹. Some exceptions, that can neither be dissembled nor eluded, render this mode of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous: the kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the sultans of Egypt²², and the Turks²³: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have

have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant; and the Roman province of Arabia ²⁴ embraced the peculiar wilderness in which Ismael and his sons must have pitched their tents, in the face of their brethren. Yet these exceptions are temporary or local; the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies: the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never atchieve the conquest of Arabia; the present sovereign of the Turks ²⁵ may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people, whom it is dangerous to provoke and fruitless to attack. The obvious causes of their freedom are inscribed on the character and country of the Arabs. Many ages before Mahomet ²⁶, their intrepid valour had been severely felt by their neighbours in offensive and defensive war. The patient and active virtues of a foldier are insensibly nursed in the habits and discipline of a pastoral life. The care of the sheep and camels is abandoned to the women of the tribe; but the martial youth under the banner of the emir, is ever on horseback, and in the field, to practise the exercise of the bow, the javelin, and the scymetar. The long memory of their independence is the firmest pledge of its perpetuity, and succeeding generations are animated to prove their descent and to maintain their inheritance. Their domestic feuds are suspended on the approach of a common enemy; and in their last hostilities against the Turks, the caravan of Mecca



CHAP.
L.

was attacked and pillaged by fourscore thousand of the confederates. When they advance to battle, the hope of victory is in the front; in the rear, the assurance of a retreat. Their horses and camels, who in eight or ten days can perform a march of four or five hundred miles, disappear before the conqueror; the secret waters of the desert elude his search; and his victorious troops are consumed with thirst, hunger, and fatigue, in the pursuit of an invisible foe, who scorns his efforts, and safely reposes in the heart of the burning solitude. The arms and deserts of the Bedowees are not only the safeguards of their own freedom, but the barriers also of the happy Arabia, whose inhabitants, remote from war, are enervated by the luxury of the soil and climate. The legions of Augustus melted away in disease and lassitude²⁷; and it is only by a naval power that the reduction of Yemen has been successfully attempted. When Mahomet erected his holy standard²⁸, that kingdom was a province of the Persian empire; yet seven princes of the Homerites still reigned in the mountains; and the vicegerent of Chosroes was tempted to forget his distant country and his unfortunate master. The historians of the age of Justinian represent the state of the independent Arabs, who were divided by interest or affection in the long quarrel of the East: the tribe of *Gassan* was allowed to encamp on the Syrian territory: the princes of *Hira* were permitted to form a city about forty miles to the southward of the ruins of Babylon. Their service

in the field was speedy and vigorous; but their friendship was venal, their faith inconstant, their enmity capricious: it was an easier task to excite than to disarm these roving Barbarians; and, in the familiar intercourse of war, they learned to see, and to despise, the splendid weakness both of Rome and of Persia. From Mecca to the Euphrates, the Arabian tribes²⁹ were confounded by the Greeks and Latins, under the general appellation of SARACENS³⁰, a name which every Christian mouth has been taught to pronounce with terror and abhorrence.

The slaves of domestic tyranny may vainly exult in their national independence; but the Arab is personally free; and he enjoys, in some degree, the benefits of society, without forfeiting the prerogatives of nature. In every tribe, superstition, or gratitude, or fortune, has exalted a particular family above the heads of their equals. The dignities of sheich and emir invariably descend in this chosen race; but the order of succession is loose and precarious; and the most worthy or aged of the noble kinsmen are preferred to the simple, though important, office of composing disputes by their advice, and guiding valour by their example. Even a female of sense and spirit has been permitted to command the countrymen of Zenobia³¹. The momentary junction of several tribes produces an army: their more lasting union constitutes a nation; and the supreme chief, the emir of emirs, whose banner is displayed at their head, may deserve, in the

C H A P.

I.

Their domestic freedom and character.

C H A P.
L.

eyes of strangers, the honours of the kingly name. If the Arabian princes abuse their power, they are quickly punished by the desertion of their subjects, who had been accustomed to a mild and parental jurisdiction. Their spirit is free, their steps are unconfined, the desert is open, and the tribes and families are held together by a mutual and voluntary compact. The softer natives of Yemen supported the pomp and majesty of a monarch; but if he could not leave his palace without endangering his life³², the active powers of government must have been devolved on his nobles and magistrates. The cities of Mecca and Medina present, in the heart of Asia, the form, or rather the substance, of a commonwealth. The grandfather of Mahomet, and his lineal ancestors, appear in foreign and domestic transactions as the princes of their country; but they reigned, like Pericles at Athens, or the Medici at Florence, by the opinion of their wisdom and integrity; their influence was divided with their patrimony; and the sceptre was transferred from the uncles of the prophet to a younger branch of the tribe of Koreish. On solemn occasions they convened the assembly of the people; and, since mankind must be either compelled or persuaded to obey, the use and reputation of oratory among the ancient Arabs is the clearest evidence of public freedom³³. But their simple freedom was of a very different cast from the nice and artificial machinery of the Greek and Roman republics, in which each

member possessed an undivided share of the civil and political rights of the community. In the more simple state of the Arabs, the nation is free, because each of her sons disdains a base submission to the will of a master. His breast is fortified with the austere virtues of courage, patience, and sobriety: the love of independence prompts him to exercise the habits of self-command; and fear of dishonour guards him from the meaner apprehension of pain, of danger, and of death. The gravity and firmness of the mind is conspicuous in his outward demeanor: his speech is slow, weighty, and concise, he is seldom provoked to laughter, his only gesture is that of stroking his beard, the venerable symbol of manhood; and the sense of his own importance teaches him to accost his equals without levity, and his superiors without awe³⁴. The liberty of the Saracens survived their conquests. the first caliphs indulged the bold and familiar language of their subjects: they ascended the pulpit to persuade and edify the congregation; nor was it before the seat of empire was removed to the Tigris, that the Abbassides adopted the proud and pompous ceremonial of the Persian and Byzantine courts.

In the study of nations and men, we may observe the causes that render them hostile or friendly to each other, that tend to narrow or enlarge, to mollify or exasperate, the social character. The separation of the Arabs from the rest of mankind, has accustomed them to con-

C H A P.
L.

Civil wars
and private
revenge.

CHAP. found the ideas of stranger and enemy; and the
 L. poverty of the land has introduced a maxim of
 jurisprudence, which they believe and practise to
 the present hour. They pretend, that in the
 division of the earth the rich and fertile climates
 were assigned to the other branches of the human
 family; and that the posterity of the outlaw
 Ismael might recover, by fraud or force, the
 portion of inheritance of which he had been
 unjustly deprived. According to the remark of
 Pliny, the Arabian tribes are equally addicted to
 theft and merchandise: the caravans that traverse
 the desert are ransomed or pillaged; and their
 neighbours, since the remote times of Job and
 Sesostris^{ss}, have been the victims of their rapa-
 cious spirit. If a Bedoween discovers from afar
 a solitary traveller, he rides furiously against
 him, crying, with a loud voice, "Undress
 thyself, thy aunt (*my wife*) is without a gar-
 ment." A ready submission entitles him to
 mercy; resistance will provoke the aggressor,
 and his own blood must expiate the blood which
 he presumes to shed in legitimate defence. A
 single robber, or a few associates, are branded
 with their genuine name; but the exploits of a
 numerous band assume the character of lawful
 and honourable war. The temper of a people,
 thus armed against mankind, was doubly inflamed
 by the domestic licence of rapine, murder, and
 revenge. In the constitution of Europe, the
 right of peace and war is now confined to a
 small, and the actual exercise to a much smaller,

list of respectable potentates; but each Arab, with impunity and renown, might point his javelin against the life of his countryman. The union of the nation consisted only in a vague resemblance of language and manners; and in each community, the jurisdiction of the magistrate was mute and impotent. Of the time of ignorance which preceded Mahomet, seventeen hundred battles³⁶ are recorded by tradition: hostility was embittered with the rancour of civil faction; and the recital, in prose or verse, of an obsolete feud was sufficient to rekindle the same passions among the descendants of the hostile tribes. In private life, every man, at least every family, was the judge and avenger of its own cause. The nice sensibility of honour, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, sheds its deadly venom on the quarrels of the Arabs: the honour of their women, and of their *beards*, is most easily wounded; an indecent action, a contemptuous word, can be expiated only by the blood of the offender; and such is their patient inveteracy, that they expect whole months and years the opportunity of revenge. A fine or compensation for murder is familiar to the Barbarians of every age: but in Arabia the kinsmen of the dead are at liberty to accept the atonement, or to exercise with their own hands the law of retaliation. The refined malice of the Arabs refuses even the head of the murderer, substitutes an innocent to the guilty person, and transfers the penalty to the best and most considerable of the race by

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whom they have been injured. If he falls by their hands, they are exposed in their turn to the danger of reprisals; the interest and principal of the bloody debt are accumulated; the individuals of either family lead a life of malice and suspicion, and fifty years may sometimes elapse before the account of vengeance be finally settled³⁷. This sanguinary spirit, ignorant of pity or forgiveness, has been moderated, however, by the maxims of honour, which require in every private encounter some decent equality of age and strength, of numbers and weapons. An annual festival of two, perhaps of four, months, was observed by the Arabs before the time of Mahomet, during which their swords were religiously sheathed both in foreign and domestic hostility; and this partial truce is more strongly expressive of the habits of anarchy and warfare³⁸.

Annual
truce.

Their social
qualifications
and virtues,

But the spirit of rapine and revenge was attempered by the milder influence of trade and literature. The solitary peninsula is encompassed by the most civilized nations of the ancient world: the merchant is the friend of mankind; and the annual caravans imported the first seeds of knowledge and politeness into the cities, and even the camps of the desert. Whatever may be the pedigree of the Arabs, their language is derived from the same original stock with the Hebrew, the Syriac, and the Chaldean tongues; the independence of the tribes was marked by their peculiar dialects; but each, after their

own, allowed a just preference to the pure and perspicuous idiom of Mecca. In Arabia as well as in Greece, the perfection of language outstripped the refinement of manners; and her speech could diversify the fourscore names of honey, the two hundred of a serpent, the five hundred of a lion, the thousand of a sword, at a time when this copious dictionary was entrusted to the memory of an illiterate people. The monuments of the Homerites were inscribed with an obsolete and mysterious character; but the Cufic letters, the ground-work of the present alphabet, were invented on the banks of the Euphrates; and the recent invention was taught at Mecca by a stranger who settled in that city after the birth of Mahomet. The arts of grammar, of metre, and of rhetoric, were unknown to the freeborn eloquence of the Arabians; but their penetration was sharp, their fancy luxuriant, their wit strong and sententious⁴⁰, and their more elaborate compositions were addressed with energy and effect to the minds of their hearers. The genius and merit of a rising poet was celebrated by the applause of his own and the kindred tribes. A solemn banquet was prepared, and a chorus of women, striking their tymbals, and displaying the pomp of their nuptials, sung in the presence of their sons and husbands the felicity of their native tribe; that a champion had now appeared to vindicate their rights; that a herald had raised his voice to immortalise their renown. The distant or hostile

Love of
poetry.

CHAP. tribes resorted to an annual fair which was
 L. abolished by the fanaticism of the first Moslems;
 a national assembly that must have contributed
 to refine and harmonise the Barbarians. Thirty
 days were employed in the exchange, not only
 of corn and wine, but of eloquence and poetry.
 The prize was disputed by the generous emula-
 tion of the bards; the victorious performance
 was deposited in the archives of princes and
 emirs; and we may read in our own language,
 the seven original poems which were inscribed
 in letters of gold, and suspended in the temple
 of Mecca ⁴¹. The Arabian poets were the
 historians and moralists of the age; and if they
 sympathised with the prejudices, they inspired
 and crowned the virtues, of their countrymen.
 The indissoluble union of generosity and valour
 was the darling theme of their song; and when
 they pointed their keenest satire against a despic-
 able race, they affirmed, in the bitterness of
 reproach, that the men knew not how to give,
 nor the women to deny ⁴². The same hospitality,
 which was practised by Abraham and celebrated
 by Homer, is still renewed in the camps of the
 Arabs. The ferocious Bedowens, the terror of
 the desert, embrace, without enquiry or hesita-
 tion, the stranger who dares to confide in their
 honour and to enter their tent. His treatment is
 kind and respectful: he shares the wealth or the
 poverty of his host; and, after a needful repose,
 he is dismissed on his way, with thanks, with
 blessings, and perhaps with gifts. The heart and

Examples of
 generosity.

hand are more largely expanded by the wants of a brother or a friend; but the heroic acts that could deserve the public applause, must have surpassed the narrow measure of discretion and experience. A dispute had arisen, who, among the citizens of Mecca, was entitled to the prize of generosity; and a successive application was made to the three who were deemed most worthy of the trial. Abdallah, the son of Abbas, had undertaken a distant journey, and his foot was in the stirrup when he heard the voice of a suppliant, "O son of the uncle of the apostle of God, I am a traveller and in distress." He instantly dismounted to present the pilgrim with his camel, her rich caparison, and a purse of four thousand pieces of gold, excepting only the sword, either for its intrinsic value, or as the gift of a honoured kinsman. The servant of Kais informed the second suppliant that his master was asleep; but he immediately added, "Here is a purse of seven thousand pieces of gold (it is all we have in the house), and here is an order, that will entitle you to a camel and a slave;" the master, as soon as he awoke, praised and enfranchised his faithful steward, with a gentle reproof, that by respecting his slumbers he had stinted his bounty. The third of these heroes, the blind Arabah, at the hour of prayer, was supporting his steps on the shoulders of two slaves. "Alas!" he replied, "my coffers are empty! but these you may sell; if you refuse, I renounce them." At

CHAP. these words, pushing away the youths, he
 L. groped along the wall with his staff. The character of Hatem is the perfect model of Arabian virtue⁴³; he was brave and liberal, an eloquent poet and a successful robber: forty camels were roasted at his hospitable feasts; and at the prayer of a suppliant enemy, he restored both the captives and the spoil. The freedom of his countrymen disdained the laws of justice: they proudly indulged the spontaneous impulse of pity and benevolence.

Ancient idolatry.

The religion of the Arabs⁴⁴, as well as of the Indians, consisted in the worship of the sun, the moon, and the fixed stars, a primitive and specious mode of superstition. The bright luminaries of the sky display the visible image of a Deity: their number and distance convey to a philosophic, or even a vulgar, eye, the idea of boundless space: the character of eternity is marked on these solid globes, that seem incapable of corruption or decay: the regularity of their motions may be ascribed to a principle of reason or instinct; and their real or imaginary influence encourages the vain belief that the earth and its inhabitants are the object of their peculiar care. The science of astronomy was cultivated at Babylon; but the school of the Arabs was a clear firmament and a naked plain. In their nocturnal marches, they steered by the guidance of the stars: their names, and order, and daily station, were familiar to the curiosity and devotion of the Bedoween; and he was

taught by experience to divide in twenty-eight parts, the zodiac of the moon, and to bless the constellations who refreshed, with salutary rains, the thirst of the desert. The reign of the heavenly orbs could not be extended beyond the visible sphere; and some metaphysical powers were necessary to sustain the transmigration of souls and the resurrection of bodies: a camel was left to perish on the grave, that he might serve his master in another life; and the invocation of departed spirits implies that they were still endowed with consciousness and power. I am ignorant, and I am careless, of the blind mythology of the Barbarians; of the local deities, of the stars, the air, and the earth, of their sex or titles, their attributes or subordination. Each tribe, each family, each independent warrior, created and changed the rites and the object of his fantastic worship; but the nation, in every age, has bowed to the religion, as well as to the language, of Mecca. The genuine antiquity of the CAABA ascends beyond the Christian æra: in describing the coast of the Red Sea, the Greek historian Diodorus⁴⁵ has remarked, between the Thamudites and the Sabæans, a famous temple, whose superior sanctity was revered by *all* the Arabians: the linen or silken veil, which is annually renewed by the Turkish emperor, was first offered by a pious king of the Homerites, who reigned seven hundred years before the time of Mahomet⁴⁶. A tent or a cavern might suffice for the worship

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L.

The Caaba,
or temple of
Mecca.

C H A P. of the savages, but an edifice of stone and clay
 L. has been erected in its place; and the art and power of the monarchs of the East have been confined to the simplicity of the original model⁴². A spacious portico incloses the quadrangle of the Caaba; a square chapel, twenty-four cubits long, twenty-three broad, and twenty-seven high: a door and a window admit the light; the double roof is supported by three pillars of wood; a spout (now of gold) discharges the rain-water, and the well Zemzem is protected by a dome from accidental pollution. The tribe of Koreish, by fraud or force, had acquired the custody of the Caaba: the sacerdotal office devolved through four lineal descents to the grandfather of Mahomet; and the family of the Hashemites, from whence he sprung, was the most respectable and sacred in the eyes of their country⁴³. The precincts of Mecca enjoyed the rights of sanctuary; and, in the last month of each year, the city and the temple were crowded with a long train of pilgrims, who presented their vows and offerings in the house of God. The same rites, which are now accomplished by the faithful Musulman, were invented and practised by the superstition of the idolaters. At an awful distance they cast away their garments: seven times, with hasty steps, they encircled the Caaba, and kissed the black stone: seven times they visited and adored the adjacent mountains: seven times they threw stones into the valley of Mina; and the pilgrimage was atchieved, as at the present hour,

by a sacrifice of sheep and camels, and the burial of their hair and nails in the consecrated ground. Each tribe either found or introduced in the Caaba their domestic worship: the temple was adorned, or defiled, with three hundred and sixty idols of men, eagles, lions, and antelopes; and most conspicuous was the statue of Hebal, of red agate, holding in his hand seven arrows, without heads or feathers, the instruments and symbols of profane divination. But this statue was a monument of Syrian arts: the devotion of the ruder ages was content with a pillar or a tablet; and the rocks of the desert were hewn into gods or altars, in imitation of the black stone ⁴⁹ of Mecca, which is deeply tainted with the reproach of an idolatrous origin. From Japan to Peru, the use of sacrifice has universally prevailed; and the votary has expressed his gratitude, or fear, by destroying or consuming, in honour of the gods, the dearest and most precious of their gifts. The life of a man ⁵⁰ is the most precious oblation to deprecate a public calamity: the altars of Phœnicia and Egypt, of Rome and Carthage, have been polluted with human gore: the cruel practice was long preserved among the Arabs; in the third century, a boy was annually sacrificed by the tribe of the Dumatians ⁵¹; and a royal captive was piously slaughtered by the prince of the Saracens, the ally and foldier of the emperor Justinian ⁵². A parent who drags his son to the altar, exhibits the most painful and sublime effort of fanaticism:

Sacrifices and
rites.

CHAP. the deed, or the intention, was sanctified by the
 L. example of saints and heroes; and the father of Mahomet himself was devoted by a rash vow, and hardly ransomed for the equivalent of an hundred camels. In the time of ignorance, the Arabs, like the Jews and Egyptians, abstained from the taste of swine's flesh ⁵³; they circumcised ⁵⁴ their children at the age of puberty: the same customs, without the censure or the precept of the Koran, have been silently transmitted to their posterity and profelytes. It has been sagaciously conjectured, that the artful legislator indulged the stubborn prejudices of his countrymen. It is more simple to believe that he adhered to the habits and opinions of his youth, without foreseeing that a practice congenial to the climate of Mecca, might become useless or inconvenient on the banks of the Danube or the Volga.

Introduction
 of the Sa-
 bians.

Arabia was free: the adjacent kingdoms were shaken by the storms of conquest and tyranny, and the persecuted sects fled to the happy land where they might profess what they thought, and practise what they professed. The religions of the Sabians and Magians, of the Jews and Christians, were disseminated from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. In a remote period of antiquity, Sabianism was diffused over Asia by the science of the Chaldeans ⁵⁵ and the arms of the Assyrians. From the observations of two thousand years, the priests and astronomers of Babylon ⁵⁶ deduced the eternal laws of nature and providence. They adored the seven gods or angels who

who directed the course of the seven planets, and shed their irresistible influence on the earth. The attributes of the seven planets, with the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the twenty-four constellations of the northern and southern hemisphere, were represented by images and talismans; the seven days of the week were dedicated to their respective deities; the Sabians prayed thrice each day; and the temple of the moon at Haran was the term of their pilgrimage⁹⁷. But the flexible genius of their faith was always ready either to teach or to learn: in the tradition of the creation, the deluge, and the patriarchs, they held a singular agreement with their Jewish captives; they appealed to the secret books of Adam, Seth, and Enoch; and a slight infusion of the gospel has transformed the last remnant of the Polytheists into the Christians of St. John, in the territory of Bassora⁹⁸. The altars of Babylon were over-
 turned by the Magians; but the injuries of the Sabians were revenged by the sword of Alexander; Persia groaned above five hundred years under a foreign yoke; and the purest disciples of Zoroaster escaped from the contagion of idolatry, and breathed with their adversaries the freedom of the desert⁹⁹. Seven hundred years before the death of Mahomet, the Jews were settled in Arabia: and a far greater multitude was expelled from the holy land in the wars of Titus and Hadrian. The industrious exiles aspired to liberty and power: they erected synagogues in the cities and castles in the wilderness, and their Gentile

C H A P.
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The Magi.
 ans.

The Jews.

G H A P.
 L.
 The Christi-
 ans.

converts were confounded with the children of Israel, whom they resembled in the outward mark of circumcision. The Christian missionaries were still more active and successful: the Catholics asserted their universal reign; the sects whom they oppressed successively retired beyond the limits of the Roman empire; the Marcionites and Manichæans dispersed their *phantastic* opinions and apocryphal gospels; the churches of Yemen, and the princes of Hira and Gassan, were instructed in a purer creed by the Jacobite and Nestorian bishops⁶⁰. The liberty of choice was presented to the tribes: each Arab was free to elect or to compose his private religion: and the rude superstition of his house was mingled with the sublime theology of saints and philosophers. A fundamental article of faith was inculcated by the consent of the learned strangers; the existence of one supreme God, who is exalted above the powers of heaven and earth, but who has often revealed himself to mankind by the ministry of his angels and prophets, and whose grace or justice has interrupted, by seasonable miracles, the order of nature. The most rational of the Arabs acknowledged his power, though they neglected his worship⁶¹; and it was habit rather than conviction that still attached them to the relics of idolatry. The Jews and Christians were the people of the *book*; the bible was already translated into the Arabic language⁶², and the volume of the old testament was accepted by the concord of these implacable enemies. In the story

of the Hebrew patriarchs, the Arabs were pleased to discover the fathers of their nation. They applauded the birth and promises of Ismael; revered the faith and virtue of Abraham; traced his pedigree and their own to the creation of the first man, and imbibed with equal credulity, the prodigies of the holy text, and the dreams and traditions of the Jewish rabbis.

The base and plebeian origin of Mahomet is an unskilful calumny of the Christians⁶³, who exalt instead of degrading the merit of their adversary. His descent from Ismael was a national privilege or fable; but if the first steps of the pedigree⁶⁴ are dark and doubtful, he could produce many generations of pure and genuine nobility: he sprung from the tribe of Koreish and the family of Hashem, the most illustrious of the Arabs, the princes of Mecca, and the hereditary guardians of the Caaba. The grandfather of Mahomet was Abdol Motaleb, the son of Hashem, a wealthy and generous citizen, who relieved the distress of famine with the supplies of commerce. Mecca, which had been fed by the liberality of the father, was saved by the courage of the son. The kingdom of Yemen was subject to the Christian princes of Abyssinia; their vassal Abrahah was provoked by an insult to avenge the honour of the cross; and the holy city was invested by a train of elephants and an army of Africans. A treaty was proposed; and in the first audience, the grandfather of Mahomet demanded the restitution of his cattle. "And

C H A P.
L.

Birth and
education of
Mahomet,
A. D.
569—609.

C H A P.
L.

Deliverance
of Mecca.

“ why,” said Abrahah, “ do you not rather implore my clemency in favour of your temple, which I have threatened to destroy?” “ Because,” replied the intrepid chief, “ the cattle is my own; the Caaba belongs to the gods, and *they* will defend their house from injury and sacrilege.” The want of provisions, or the valour of the Koreish, compelled the Abyssinians to a disgraceful retreat; their discomfiture has been adorned with a miraculous flight of birds, who showered down stones on the heads of the infidels; and the deliverance was long commemorated by the æra of the elephant. The glory of Abdol Motalleb was crowned with domestic happiness, his life was prolonged to the age of one hundred and ten years, and he became the father of six daughters and thirteen sons. His best beloved Abdallah was the most beautiful and modest of the Arabian youth; and in the first night, when he consummated his marriage with Amina, of the noble race of the Zahrites, two hundred virgins are said to have expired of jealousy and despair. Mahomet, or more properly Mohammed, the only son of Abdallah and Amina, was born at Mecca, four years after the death of Justinian, and two months after the defeat of the Abyssinians, whose victory would have introduced into the Caaba the religion of the Christians. In his early infancy, he was deprived of his father, his mother, and his grandfather, his uncles were strong and numerous; and in the division of the inheritance, the orphan’s share

was reduced to five camels and an Æthiopian maid-servant. At home and abroad, in peace and war, Abu Taleb, the most respectable of his uncles, was the guide and guardian of his youth; in his twenty-fifth year, he entered into the service of Cadijah, a rich and noble widow of Mecca, who soon rewarded his fidelity with the gift of her hand and fortune. The marriage-contract, in the simple style of antiquity, recites the mutual love of Mahomet and Cadijah; describes him as the most accomplished of the tribe of Koreish; and stipulates a dowry of twelve ounces of gold and twenty camels, which was supplied by the liberality of his uncle⁶⁷. By this alliance, the son of Abdallah was restored to the station of his ancestors; and the judicious matron was content with his domestic virtues, till, in the fortieth year of his age⁶⁸, he assumed the title of a prophet, and proclaimed the religion of the Koran.

According to the tradition of his companions, Mahomet⁶⁹ was distinguished by the beauty of his person, an outward gift which is seldom despised, except by those to whom it has been refused. Before he spoke, the orator engaged on his side the affections of a public or private audience. They applauded his commanding presence, his majestic aspect, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every sensation of the soul, and his gestures that enforced each expression of the tongue. In the familiar offices of life he

C H A P.

L.

Qualifications of the prophet.

C. H. A. P.
I.

scrupulously adhered to the grave and ceremonious politeness of his country: his respectful attention to the rich and powerful was dignified by his condescension and affability to the poorest citizens of Mecca: the frankness of his manners concealed the artifice of his views; and the habits of courtesy were imputed to personal friendship or universal benevolence. His memory was capacious and retentive, his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime, his judgment clear, rapid, and decisive. He possessed the courage both of thought and action; and, although his designs might gradually expand with his success, the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius. The son of Abdallah was educated in the bosom of the noblest race, in the use of the purest dialect of Arabia; and the fluency of his speech was corrected and enhanced by the practice of discreet and seasonable silence. With these powers of eloquence, Mahomet was an illiterate Barbarian: his youth had never been instructed in the arts of reading and writing⁷⁰; the common ignorance exempted him from shame or reproach, but he was reduced to a narrow circle of existence, and deprived of those faithful mirrors, which reflect to our mind the minds of sages and heroes. Yet the book of nature and of man was open to his view; and some fancy has been indulged in the political and philosophical observations which are ascribed to the Arabian traveller⁷¹. He compares the

nations and the religions of the earth; discovers the weakness of the Persian and Roman monarchies; beholds, with pity and indignation, the degeneracy of the times; and resolves to unite, under one God and one king, the invincible spirit and primitive virtues of the Arabs. Our more accurate enquiry will suggest, that instead of visiting the courts, the camps, the temples of the East, the two journies of Mahomet into Syria were confined to the fairs of Bosra and Damascus: that he was only thirteen years of age when he accompanied the caravan of his uncle, and that his duty compelled him to return as soon as he had disposed of the merchandise of Cadajah. In these hasty and superficial excursions, the eye of genius might discern some objects invisible to his grosser companions; some seeds of knowledge might be cast upon a fruitful soil; but his ignorance of the Syriac language must have checked his curiosity; and I cannot perceive, in the life or writings of Mahomet, that his prospect was far extended beyond the limits of the Arabian world. From every region of that solitary world, the pilgrims of Mecca were annually assembled, by the calls of devotion and commerce: in the free concourse of multitudes, a simple citizen, in his native tongue, might study the political state and character of the tribes, the theory and practice of the Jews and Christians. Some useful strangers might be tempted, or forced, to implore the rights of hospitality; and the enemies of Maho-

CHAP. met have named the Jew, the Persian, and the
 I. Syrian monk, whom they accuse of lending their
 secret aid to the composition of the Koran⁷².
 Conversation enriches the understanding, but soli-
 tude is the school of genius; and the uniformity
 of a work denotes the hand of a single artist.
 From his earliest youth, Mahomet was addicted
 to religious contemplation: each year, during
 the month of Ramadan, he withdrew from the
 world and from the arms of Cadijah: in the cave
 of Hera, three miles from Mecca⁷³, he consulted
 the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm, whose abode
 is not in the heavens, but in the mind of the
 prophet. The faith which, under the name of
Islam, he preached to his family and nation, is
 compounded of an eternal truth, and a necessary
 fiction THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, AND
 THAT MAHOMET IS THE APOSTLE OF GOD.

One God. It is the boast of the Jewish apologists, that
 while the learned nations of antiquity were
 deluded by the fables of polytheism, their
 simple ancestors of Palestine preserved the know-
 ledge and worship of the true God. The moral
 attributes of Jehovah may not easily be recon-
 ciled with the standard of *human* virtue: his
 metaphysical qualities are darkly expressed; but
 each page of the Pentateuch and the Prophets
 is an evidence of his power: the unity of his
 name is inscribed on the first table of the law;
 and his sanctuary was never defiled by any visible
 image of the invisible essence. After the ruin of
 the temple, the faith of the Hebrew exiles was

purified, fixed, and enlightened, by the spiritual devotion of the synagogue; and the authority of Mahomet will not justify his perpetual reproach, that the Jews of Mecca or Medina adored Ezra as the son of God ⁷⁴. But the children of Israel had ceased to be a people; and the religions of the world were guilty, at least in the eyes of the prophet, of giving sons, or daughters, or companions, to the supreme God. In the rude idolatry of the Arabs, the crime is manifest and audacious: the Sabians are poorly excused by the pre-eminence of the first planet, or intelligence, in their cœlestial hierarchy; and in the Magian system the conflict of the two principles betrays the imperfection of the conqueror. The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism: their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East: the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, and saints, and angels, the objects of popular veneration; and the Collyridian heretics, who flourished in the fruitful soil of Arabia, invested the Virgin Mary with the name and honours of a goddess ⁷⁵. The mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation appear to contradict the principle of the divine unity. In their obvious sense, they introduce three equal deities, and transform the man Jesus into the substance of the son of God ⁷⁶: an orthodox commentary will satisfy only a believing mind: intemperate curiosity and zeal had torn the veil

CHAP. of the sanctuary; and each of the Oriental sects
 L. was eager to confess that all, except themselves, deserved the reproach of idolatry and polytheism. The creed of Mahomet is free from suspicion or ambiguity; and the Koran is a glorious testimony to the unity of God. The prophet of Mecca rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets, on the rational principle that whatever rises must set, that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish⁷⁷. In the Author of the universe, his rational enthusiasm confessed and adored an infinite and eternal being, without form or place, without issue or similitude, present to our most secret thoughts, existing by the necessity of his own nature, and deriving from himself all moral and intellectual perfection. These sublime truths, thus announced in the language of the prophet⁷⁸, are firmly held by his disciples, and defined with metaphysical precision by the interpreters of the Koran. A philosophic theist might subscribe the popular creed of the Mahometans⁷⁹; a creed too sublime perhaps for our present faculties. What object remains for the fancy, or even the understanding, when we have abstracted from the unknown substance all ideas of time and space, of motion and matter, of sensation and reflection? The first principle of reason and revelation was confirmed by the voice of Mahomet: his profelytes, from India to Marocco, are distinguished by the name of *Unitarians*; and the danger of idolatry has been prevented by the

interdiction of images. The doctrine of eternal decrees and absolute predestination is strictly embraced by the Mahometans; and they struggle with the common difficulties, *how* to reconcile the prescience of God with the freedom and responsibility of man; *how* to explain the permission of evil under the reign of infinite power and infinite goodness.

The God of nature has written his existence on all his works, and his law in the heart of man. To restore the knowledge of the one and the practice of the other, has been the real or pretended aim of the prophets of every age: the liberality of Mahomet allowed to his predecessors the same credit which he claimed for himself; and the chain of inspiration was prolonged from the fall of Adam to the promulgation of the Koran *. During that period, some rays of prophetic light had been imparted to one hundred and twenty-four thousand of the elect, discriminated by their respective measure of virtue and grace; three hundred and thirteen apostles were sent with a special commission to recal their country from idolatry and vice; one hundred and four volumes have been dictated by the holy spirit; and six legislators of transcendent brightness have announced to mankind the six successive revelations of various rites, but of one immutable religion. The authority and station of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, rise in just gradation above each other; but whosoever hates or rejects

Mahomet,
the apostle of
God, and the
last of the
prophets.

any one of the prophets, is numbered with the
 infidels. The writings of the patriarchs were
 extant only in the apocryphal copies of the
 Greeks and Syrians⁸¹: the conduct of Adam
 had not entitled him to the gratitude or respect
 of his children; the seven precepts of Noah were
 observed by an inferior and imperfect class of the
 profelytes of the synagogue⁸²; and the memory
 of Abraham was obscurely revered by the Sabi-
 ans in his native land of Chaldæa: of the myriads
 of prophets, Moses and Christ alone lived and
 reigned; and the remnant of the inspired writings
 was comprised in the books of the Old and the
 New Testament. The miraculous story of Moses
 is consecrated and embellished in the Koran⁸³;
 and the captive Jews enjoy the secret revenge
 of imposing their own belief on the nations
 whose recent creeds they deride. For the author
 of Christianity, the Mahometans are taught by
 the prophet to entertain an high and mysterious
 reverence⁸⁴. “ Verily, Christ Jesus, the son of
 “ Mary, is the apostle of God, and his word,
 “ which he conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit
 “ proceeding from him: honourable in this world
 “ and in the world to come; and one of those who
 “ approach near to the presence of God⁸⁵. ” The
 wonders of the genuine and apocryphal gospels⁸⁶
 are profusely heaped on his head; and the Latin
 church has not disdained to borrow from the Koran
 the immaculate conception⁸⁷ of his virgin mother.
 Yet Jesus was a mere mortal; and, at the day
 of judgment, his testimony will serve to condemn

both the Jews, who reject him as a prophet, and the Christians, who adore him as the Son of God. The malice of his enemies aspersed his reputation, and conspired against his life; but their intention only was guilty, a phantom or a criminal was substituted on the cross, and the innocent saint was translated to the seventh heaven⁸⁸. During six hundred years the gospel was the way of truth and salvation; but the Christians insensibly forgot both the laws and the example of their founder; and Mahomet was instructed by the Gnostics to accuse the church, as well as the synagogue, of corrupting the integrity of the sacred text⁸⁹. The piety of Moses and of Christ rejoiced in the assurance of a future prophet, more illustrious than themselves: the evangelic promise of the *Paraclete*, or Holy Ghost, was prefigured in the name, and accomplished in the person, of Mahomet⁹⁰, the greatest and the last of the apostles of God.

The communication of ideas requires a similitude of thought and language: the discourse of a philosopher would vibrate without effect on the ear of a peasant; yet how minute is the distance of *their* understandings, if it be compared with the contact of an infinite and a finite mind, with the word of God expressed by the tongue or the pen of a mortal? The inspiration of the Hebrew prophets, of the apostles and evangelists of Christ, might not be incompatible with the exercise of their reason and memory; and the

The Koran.

CHAP. L. diversity of their genius is strongly marked in the style and composition of the books of the Old and New Testament. But Mahomet was content with a character, more humble, yet more sublime, of a simple editor: the substance of the Koran⁹¹, according to himself or his disciples, is uncreated and eternal; subsisting in the essence of the Deity, and inscribed with a pen of light on the table of his everlasting decrees. A paper copy in a volume of silk and gems, was brought down to the lowest heaven by the angel Gabriel, who, under the Jewish œconomy, had indeed been dispatched on the most important errands; and this trusty messenger successively revealed the chapters and verses to the Arabian prophet. Instead of a perpetual and perfect measure of the divine will, the fragments of the Koran were produced at the discretion of Mahomet; each revelation is suited to the emergencies of his policy or passion; and all contradiction is removed by the saving maxim, that any text of scripture is abrogated or modified by any subsequent passage. The word of God, and of the apostle, was diligently recorded by his disciples on palm-leaves and the shoulder-bones of mutton; and the pages, without order or connection, were cast into a domestic chest in the custody of one of his wives. Two years after the death of Mahomet, the sacred volume was collected and published by his friend and successor Abubeker: the work was revised by the caliph Othman, in the thirtieth year of the Hegira; and the various editions of

the Koran assert the same miraculous privilege of an uniform and incorruptible text. In the spirit of enthusiasm or vanity, the prophet rests the truth of his mission on the merit of his book, audaciously challenges both men and angels to imitate the beauties of a single page, and presumes to assert that God alone could dictate this incomparable performance²². This argument is most powerfully addressed to a devout Arabian, whose mind is attuned to faith and rapture, whose ear is delighted by the music of sounds, and whose ignorance is incapable of comparing the productions of human genius²³. The harmony and copiousness of style will not reach, in a version, the European infidel: he will peruse with impatience the endless incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea, which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian missionary; but his loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the book of Job, composed in a remote age, in the same country and in the same language²⁴. If the composition of the Koran exceed the faculties of a man, to what superior intelligence should we ascribe the Iliad of Homer or the Philippics of Demosthenes? In all religions, the life of the founder supplies the silence of his written revelation: the sayings of Mahomet were so many lessons of truth; his actions so many examples of virtue; and the public and private memorials

C H A P. were preserved by his wives and companions. At
L. the end of two hundred years, the *Sonna* or oral law was fixed and consecrated by the labours of Al Bochari, who discriminated seven thousand two hundred and seventy-five genuine traditions, from a mass of three hundred thousand reports, of a more doubtful or spurious character. Each day the pious author prayed in the temple of Mecca, and performed his ablutions with the water of Zemzem: the pages were successively deposited on the pulpit, and the sepulchre of the apostle; and the work has been approved by the four orthodox sects of the Sonnites⁹⁵.

Miracles. The mission of the ancient prophets, of Moses and of Jesus, had been confirmed by many splendid prodigies; and Mahomet was repeatedly urged, by the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina, to produce a similar evidence of his divine legation; to call down from heaven the angel or the volume of his revelation, to create a garden in the desert, or to kindle a conflagration in the unbelieving city. As often as he is pressed by the demands of the Koreish, he involves himself in the obscure boast of vision and prophecy, appeals to the internal proofs of his doctrine, and shields himself behind the providence of God, who refuses those signs and wonders that would depreciate the merit of faith and aggravate the guilt of infidelity. But the modest or angry tone of his apologies betrays his weakness and vexation; and these passages of scandal establish, beyond suspicion, the integrity of the Koran⁹⁶.

The

The votaries of Mahomet are more assured than himself of his miraculous gifts, and their confidence and credulity encrease as they are farther removed from the time and place of his spiritual exploits. They believe or affirm that trees went forth to meet him; that he was saluted by stones; that water gushed from his fingers; that he fed the hungry, cured the sick, and raised the dead; that a beam groaned to him; that a camel complained to him; that a shoulder of mutton informed him of its being poisoned; and that both animate and inanimate nature were equally subject to the apostle of God⁹⁷. His dream of a nocturnal journey is seriously described as a real and corporeal transaction. A mysterious animal, the Borak, conveyed him from the temple of Mecca to that of Jerusalem: with his companion Gabriel, he successively ascended the seven heavens, and received and repaid the salutations of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the angels, in their respective mansions. Beyond the seventh heaven, Mahomet alone was permitted to proceed; he passed the veil of unity, approached within two bow-shots of the throne, and felt a cold that pierced him to the heart, when his shoulder was touched by the hand of God. After this familiar though important conversation, he again descended to Jerusalem, remounted the Borak, returned to Mecca, and performed in the tenth part of a night the journey of many thousand years⁹⁸. According to another legend, the apostle confounded in a national assembly

CHAP. the malicious challenge of the Koreish. His re-
 L. sistless word split asunder the orb of the moon: the obedient planet stooped from her station in the sky, accomplished the seven revolutions round the Caaba, saluted Mahomet in the Arabian tongue, and suddenly contracting her dimensions, entered at the collar, and issued forth through the sleeve, of his shirt⁹⁹. The vulgar are amused with these marvellous tales; but the gravest of the Musulman doctors imitate the modesty of their master, and indulge a latitude of faith or interpretation¹⁰⁰. They might speciously allege, that in preaching the religion, it was needless to violate the harmony, of nature; that a creed unclouded with mystery may be excused from miracles; and that the sword of Mahomet was not less potent than the rod of Moses.

Precepts of
 Mahomet—
 prayer, fast-
 ing, alms.

The polytheist is oppressed and distracted by the variety of superstition: a thousand rites of Egyptian origin were interwoven with the essence of the Mosaic law; and the spirit of the gospel had evaporated in the pageantry of the church. The prophet of Mecca was tempted by prejudice, or policy, or patriotism, to sanctify the rites of the Arabians, and the custom of visiting the holy stone of the Caaba. But the precepts of Mahomet himself inculcate a more simple and rational piety: prayer, fasting, and alms, are the religious duties of a Musulman; and he is encouraged to hope, that prayer will carry him half way to God, fasting will bring him to the door of his palace, and alms will gain him admittance¹⁰¹. I. According to the tradition of

the nocturnal journey, the apostle, in his personal conference with the Deity, was commanded to impose on his disciples the daily obligation of fifty prayers. By the advice of Moses, he applied for an alleviation of this intolerable burthen; the number was gradually reduced to five; without any dispensation of business or pleasure, or time or place: the devotion of the faithful is repeated at day-break, at noon, in the afternoon, in the evening, and at the first watch of the night; and, in the present decay of religious fervour, our travellers are edified by the profound humility and attention of the Turks and Persians. Cleanliness is the key of prayer: the frequent lustration of the hands, the face, and the body, which was practised of old by the Arabs, is solemnly enjoined by the Koran; and a permission is formally granted to supply with sand the scarcity of water. The words and attitudes of supplication, as it is performed either sitting, or standing, or prostrate on the ground, are prescribed by custom or authority, but the prayer is poured forth in short and fervent ejaculations; the measure of zeal is not exhausted by a tedious liturgy; and each Musulman, for his own person, is invested with the character of a priest. Among the theists, who reject the use of images, it has been found necessary to restrain the wanderings of the fancy, by directing the eye and the thought towards a *kebla*, or visible point of the horizon. The prophet was at first inclined to gratify the Jews by the choice

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CHAP. of Jerusalem ; but he soon returned to a more natural partiality ; and five times every day the eyes of the nations at Astracan, at Fez, at Delhi, are devoutly turned to the holy temple of Mecca. Yet every spot for the service of God is equally pure : the Mahometans indifferently pray in their chamber or in the street. As a distinction from the Jews and Christians, the Friday in each week is set apart for the useful institution of public worship : the people is assembled in the mosch and the imam : some respectable elder ascends the pulpit, to begin the prayer and pronounce the sermon. But the Mahometan religion is destitute of priesthood or sacrifice ; and the independent spirit of fanaticism looks down with contempt on the ministers and the slaves of superstition. II. The voluntary¹⁰² penance of the ascetics, the torment and glory of their lives, was odious to a prophet who censured in his companions a rash vow of abstaining from flesh, and women, and sleep ; and firmly declared, that he would suffer no monks in his religion¹⁰³. Yet he instituted, in each year, a fast of thirty days ; and strenuously recommended the observance, as a discipline which purifies the soul and subdues the body, as a salutary exercise of obedience to the will of God and his apostle. During the month of Ramadan, from the rising to the setting of the sun, the Musulman abstains from eating, and drinking, and women, and baths, and perfumes ; from all nourishment that can restore his strength, from all

pleasure that can gratify his senses. In the revolution of the lunar year, the Ramadan coincides by turns with the winter cold and the summer heat; and the patient martyr, without assuaging his thirst with a drop of water, must expect the close of a tedious and sultry day. The interdiction of wine, peculiar to some orders of priests or hermits, is converted by Mahomet alone into a positive and general law¹⁰⁴; and a considerable portion of the globe has abjured, at his command, the use of that salutary, though dangerous, liquor. These painful restraints are, doubtless, infringed by the libertine and eluded by the hypocrite; but the legislator, by whom they are enacted, cannot surely be accused of alluring his proselytes by the indulgence of their sensual appetites. III. The charity of the Mahometans descends to the animal creation; and the Koran repeatedly inculcates, not as a merit, but as a strict and indispensable duty, the relief of the indigent and unfortunate. Mahomet, perhaps, is the only lawgiver who has defined the precise measure of charity: the standard may vary with the degree and nature of property, as it consists either in money, in corn or cattle, in fruits or merchandise; but the Musulman does not accomplish the law, unless he bestows a *tenth* of his revenue; and if his conscience accuses him of fraud or extortion, the tenth, under the idea of restitution, is enlarged to a *fifth*¹⁰⁵. Benevolence is the foundation of justice, since we are forbid to injure those whom we are bound

CHAP. to assist. A prophet may reveal the secrets of
 L. heaven and of futurity; but in his moral pre-
 cepts he can only repeat the lessons of our
 own hearts.

Resurrection. The two articles of belief, and the four practi-
 cal duties of Islam, are guarded by rewards and
 punishments; and the faith of the Musulman is
 devoutly fixed on the event of the judgment and
 the last day. The prophet has not presumed
 to determine the moment of that awful cata-
 strophe, though he darkly announces the signs,
 both in heaven and earth, which will precede
 the universal dissolution, when life shall be de-
 stroyed, and the order of creation shall be con-
 founded in the primitive chaos. At the blast of
 the trumpet, new worlds will start into being;
 angels, genii, and men, will arise from the dead,
 and the human soul will again be united to the
 body. The doctrine of the resurrection was first
 entertained by the Egyptians¹⁰⁶; and their mum-
 mies were embalmed, their pyramids were con-
 structed, to preserve the ancient mansion of the
 soul, during a period of three thousand years.
 But the attempt is partial and unavailing; and it
 is with a more philosophic spirit that Mahomet
 relies on the omnipotence of the Creator, whose
 word can reanimate the breathless clay, and col-
 lect the innumerable atoms, that no longer retain
 their form or substance¹⁰⁷. The intermediate
 state of the soul it is hard to decide; and those
 who most firmly believe her immaterial nature are
 at a loss to understand how she can think or act
 without the agency of the organs of sense.

The re-union of the soul and body will be followed by the final judgment of mankind; and, in his copy of the Magian picture, the prophet has too faithfully represented the forms of proceeding, and even the slow and successive operations of an earthly tribunal. By his intolerant adversaries he is upbraided for extending, even to themselves, the hope of salvation, for asserting the blackest heresy, that every man who believes in God, and accomplishes good works, may expect in the last day a favourable sentence. Such rational indifference is ill adapted to the character of a fanatic; nor is it probable that a messenger from heaven should depreciate the value and necessity of his own revelation. In the idiom of the Koran ¹⁰⁸, the belief of God is inseparable from that of Mahomet: the good works are those which he has enjoined; and the two qualifications imply the profession of Islam, to which all nations and all sects are equally invited. Their spiritual blindness, though excused by ignorance and crowned with virtue, will be scourged with everlasting torments; and the tears which Mahomet shed over the tomb of his mother, for whom he was forbidden to pray, display a striking contrast of humanity and enthusiasm ¹⁰⁹. The doom of the infidels is common: the measure of their guilt and punishment is determined by the decree of evidence which they have rejected, by the magnitude of the errors which they have entertained: the eternal mansions of the Christians, the Jews,

C H A P.

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Hell and
paradise.

C H A P. the Sabians, the Magians, and the idolaters,
 L. are sunk below each other in the abyfs; and the lowest hell is reserved for the faithless hypocrites who have assumed the mask of religion. After the greater part of mankind has been condemned for their opinions, the true believers only will be judged by their actions. The good and evil of each Musulman will be accurately weighed in a real or allegorical balance, and a singular mode of compensation will be allowed for the payment of injuries: the aggressor will refund an equivalent of his own good actions, for the benefit of the person whom he has wronged; and if he should be destitute of any moral property, the weight of his sins will be loaded with an adequate share of the demerits of the sufferer. According as the shares of guilt or virtue shall preponderate, the sentence will be pronounced, and all, without distinction, will pass over the sharp and perilous bridge of the abyfs; but the innocent, treading in the footsteps of Mahomet, will gloriously enter the gates of paradise, while the guilty will fall into the first and mildest of the seven hells. The term of expiation will vary from nine hundred to seven thousand years; but the prophet has judiciously promised, that *all* his disciples, whatever may be their sins, shall be saved, by their own faith and his intercession, from eternal damnation. It is not surprising that superstition should act most powerfully on the fears of her votaries, since the human fancy can paint with more energy

the misery than the bliss of a future life. With the two simple elements of darkness and fire, we create a sensation of pain, which may be aggravated to an infinite degree by the idea of endless duration. But the same idea operates with an opposite effect on the continuity of pleasure; and too much of our present enjoyments is obtained from the relief or the comparison of evil. It is natural enough that an Arabian prophet should dwell with rapture on the groves, the fountains, and the rivers, of paradise; but instead of inspiring the blessed inhabitants with a liberal taste for harmony and science, conversation and friendship, he idly celebrates the pearls and diamonds, the robes of silk, palaces of marble, dishes of gold, rich wines, artificial dainties, numerous attendants, and the whole train of sensual and costly luxury, which becomes insipid to the owner, even in the short period of this mortal life. Seventy-two *Houris*, or black-eyed girls, of resplendent beauty, blooming youth, virgin purity, and exquisite sensibility, will be created for the use of the meanest believer; a moment of pleasure will be prolonged to a thousand years, and his faculties will be encreased an hundred fold, to render him worthy of his felicity. Notwithstanding a vulgar prejudice, the gates of heaven will be open to both sexes; but Mahomet has not specified the male companions of the female elect, lest he should either alarm the jealousy of their former husbands, or disturb their felicity, by the suspicion of an everlasting

CHAP. marriage. This image of a carnal paradise has
 L. provoked the indignation, perhaps the envy, of
 the monks: they declaim against the impure
 religion of Mahomet; and his modest apologists
 are driven to the poor excuse of figures and
 allegories. But the founder and more consistent
 party adhere, without shame, to the literal
 interpretation of the Koran: useless would be
 the resurrection of the body, unless it were
 restored to the possession and exercise of its
 worthiest faculties; and the union of sensual and
 intellectual enjoyment is requisite to complete
 the happiness of the double animal, the perfect
 man. Yet the joys of the Mahometan paradise
 will not be confined to the indulgence of luxury
 and appetite; and the prophet has expressly
 declared, that all meaner happiness will be
 forgotten and despised by the saints and mar-
 tyrs, who shall be admitted to the beatitude of
 the divine vision ¹¹⁰.

Mahomet
 preaches at
 Mecca,
 A. D. 609,

The first and most arduous conquests of Maho-
 met ¹¹¹ were those of his wife, his servant, his
 pupil, and his friend ¹¹²; since he presented him-
 self as a prophet to those who were most conversant
 with his infirmities as a man. Yet Cadijah
 believed the words, and cherished the glory, of
 her husband; the obsequious and affectionate Zeid
 was tempted by the prospect of freedom; the il-
 lustrious Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, embraced
 the sentiments of his cousin with the spirit of a
 youthful hero; and the wealth, the moderation,
 the veracity of Abubeker, confirmed the religion

of the prophet whom he was destined to succeed. By his persuasion, ten of the most respectable citizens of Mecca were introduced to the private lessons of Islam; they yielded to the voice of reason and enthusiasm; they repeated the fundamental creed; "there is but one God, " and Mahomet is the apostle of God;" and their faith, even in this life, was rewarded with riches and honours, with the command of armies and the government of kingdoms. Three years were silently employed in the conversion of fourteen profelytes, the first fruits of his mission; but in the fourth year he assumed the prophetic office, and resolving to impart to his family the light of divine truth, he prepared a banquet, a lamb, as it is said, and a bowl of milk, for the entertainment of forty guests of the race of Hashem. "Friends and kinsmen," said Mahomet to the assembly, "I offer you, and I alone can " offer, the most precious of gifts, the treasures " of this world and of the world to come. God " has commanded me to call you to his service. " Who among you will support my burthen? " Who among you will be my companion and " my vizir¹¹³?" No answer was returned, till the silence of astonishment, and doubt, and contempt, was at length broken by the impatient courage of Ali, a youth in the fourteenth year of his age. "O prophet, I am the man: who-so- " ever rises against thee, I will dash out his teeth, " tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip up his " belly. O prophet, I will be thy vizir over

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“ them.” Mahomet accepted his offer with transport, and Abu Taleb was ironically exhorted to respect the superior dignity of his son. In a more serious tone, the father of Ali advised his nephew to relinquish his impracticable design. „ Spare
“ your remonstrances,” replied the intrepid fanatic to his uncle and benefactor; “ if they should
“ place the sun on my right-hand and the moon
“ on my left, they should not divert me from
“ my course.” He persevered ten years in the exercise of his mission; and the religion which has overspread the East and the West, advanced with a slow and painful progress within the walls of Mecca. Yet Mahomet enjoyed the satisfaction of beholding the encrease of his infant congregation of Unitarians, who revered him as a prophet, and to whom he seasonably dispensed the spiritual nourishment of the Koran. The number of proselytes may be esteemed by the absence of eighty-three men and eighteen women, who retired to Æthiopia in the seventh year of his mission: and his party was fortified by the timely conversion of his uncle Hamza, and of the fierce and inflexible Omar, who signalised in the cause of Islam the same zeal which he had exerted for its destruction. Nor was the charity of Mahomet confined to the tribe of Koreish or the precincts of Mecca: on solemn festivals, in the days of pilgrimage, he frequented the Caaba, accosted the strangers of every tribe, and urged, both in private converse and public discourse, the belief and worship of a sole Deity. Conscious

of his reason and of his weakness, he asserted the liberty of conscience, and disclaimed the use of religious violence ¹¹⁴: but he called the Arabs to repentance, and conjured them to remember the ancient idolaters of Ad and Thamud, whom the divine justice had swept away from the face of the earth ¹¹⁵.

The people of Mecca was hardened in their unbelief by superstition and envy. The elders of the city, the uncles of the prophet, affected to despise the presumption of an orphan, the reformer of his country: the pious orations of Mahomet in the Caaba were answered by the clamours of Abu Taleb. „ Citizens and pilgrims, listen not “ to the tempter, hearken not to his impious “ novelties. Stand fast in the worship of Al Lâta “ and Al Uzzah.” Yet the son of Abdallah was ever dear to the aged chief; and he protected the fame and person of his nephew against the assaults of the Koreishites, who had long been jealous of the pre-eminence of the family of Hashem. Their malice was coloured with the pretence of religion: in the age of Job, the crime of impiety was punished by the Arabian magistrate ¹¹⁶; and Mahomet was guilty of deserting and denying the national deities. But so loose was the policy of Mecca, that the leaders of the Koreish, instead of accusing a criminal, were compelled to employ the measures of persuasion or violence. They repeatedly addressed Abu Taleb in the style of reproach and menace. “ Thy nephew reviles “ our religion; he accuses our wise forefathers

C H A P.

L.

Is opposed,
by the Ko-
reish.

A. D.

613—622.

C H A P. " of ignorance and folly ; silence him quickly ,
 L. " lest he kindle tumult and discord in the city.
 " If he persevere , we shall draw our swords
 " against him and his adherents , and thou wilt
 " be responsible for the blood of thy fellow-citi-
 " zens." The weight and moderation of Abu
 Taleb eluded the violence of religious faction ;
 the most helpless or timid of the disciples retired
 to Æthiopia , and the prophet withdrew himself to
 various places of strength in the town and country.
 As he was still supported by his family , the rest of
 the tribe of Koreish engaged themselves to renounce
 all intercourse with the children of Hashem , neither
 to buy nor sell , neither to marry nor to give
 in marriage , but to pursue them with implacable
 enmity , till they should deliver the person of
 Mahomet to the justice of the gods. The decree
 was suspended in the Caaba before the eyes of
 the nation ; the messengers of the Koreish pursued
 the Musulman exiles in the heart of Africa : they
 besieged the prophet and his most faithful fol-
 lowers , intercepted their water , and inflamed
 their mutual animosity by the retaliation of in-
 juries and insults. A doubtful truce restored the
 appearances of concord ; till the death of Abu
 Taleb abandoned Mahomet to the power of his
 enemies , at the moment when he was deprived
 of his domestic comforts by the loss of his faith-
 ful and generous Cadijah. Abu Sophian , the
 chief of the branch of Ommyah , succeeded to
 the principality of the republic of Mecca. A
 zealous votary of the idols , a mortal foe of the

line of Hashem, he convened an assembly of the Koreishites and their allies, to decide the fate of the apostle. His imprisonment might provoke the despair of his enthusiasm; and the exile of an eloquent and popular fanatic would diffuse the mischief through the provinces of Arabia. His death was resolved; and they agreed that a sword from each tribe should be buried in his heart, to divide the guilt of his blood and baffle the vengeance of the Hashemites. An angel or a spy revealed their conspiracy; and flight was the only resource of Mahomet¹¹⁷. At the dead of night, accompanied by his friend Abubeker, he silently escaped from his house: the assassins watched at the door; but they were deceived by the figure of Ali, who reposed on the bed, and was covered with the green vestment of the apostle. The Koreish respected the piety of the heroic youth; but some verses of Ali, which are still extant, exhibit an interesting picture of his anxiety, his tenderness, and his religious confidence. Three days Mahomet and his companion were concealed in the cave of Thor, at the distance of a league from Mecca; and in the close of each evening, they received from the son and daughter of Abubeker, a secret supply of intelligence and food. The diligence of the Koreish explored every haunt in the neighbourhood of the city, they arrived at the entrance of the cavern; but the providential deceit of a spider's web and a pigeon's nest, is supposed to convince them that the place was solitary and inviolate. "We are only two," said

CHAP.

L.

and driven
from Mecca,
A. D. 662,

CHAP. the trembling Abubeker. "There is a third,"
 L. replied the prophet; "it is God himself." No
 sooner was the pursuit abated, than the two
 fugitives issued from the rock, and mounted their
 camels: on the road to Medina, they were over-
 taken by the emissaries of the Koreish; they re-
 deemed themselves with prayers and promises
 from their hands. In this eventful moment, the
 lance of an Arab might have changed the history
 of the world. The flight of the prophet from Mecca
 to Medina has fixed the memorable æra of the
*Hegira*¹¹⁸, which, at the end of twelve centuries,
 still discriminates the lunar years of the Maho-
 metan nations¹¹⁹.

Received as
 prince of
 Medina,
 A. D. 622,

The religion of the Koran might have perished
 in its cradle, had not Medina embraced with
 faith and reverence the holy outcasts of Mecca.
 Medina, or the *city*, known under the name of
 Yathreb, before it was sanctified by the throne of
 the prophet, was divided between the tribes of
 the Charegites and the Awsites, whose heredi-
 tary feud was rekindled by the slightest provo-
 cations: two colonies of Jews, who boasted a
 sacerdotal race, were their humble allies, and
 without converting the Arabs, they introduced
 the taste of science, and religion, which distin-
 guished Medina as the city of the book. Some
 of her noblest citizens, in a pilgrimage to the
 Caaba, were converted by the preaching of
 Mahomet; on their return they diffused the be-
 lief of God and his prophet, and the new al-
 liance was ratified by their deputies in two secret
 and

and nocturnal interviews on a hill in the suburbs of Mecca. In the first, ten Charegites and two Awfites united in faith and love, protested in the name of their wives, their children, and their absent brethren, that they would for ever profess the creed, and observe the precepts, of the Koran. The second was a political association, the first vital spark of the empire of the Saracens¹²⁰. Seventy-three men and two women of Medina held a solemn conference with Mahomet, his kinsmen, and his disciples; and pledged themselves to each other by a mutual oath of fidelity. They promised in the name of the city, that if he should be punished, they would receive him as a confederate, obey him as a leader, and defend him to the last extremity, like their wives and children. "But if you are recalled by your country," they asked with a flattering anxiety, "will you not abandon your new allies?" "All things," replied Mahomet with a smile, "are now common between us; your blood is as my blood, your ruin as my ruin. We are bound to each other by the ties of honour and interest. I am your friend, and the enemy of your foes." "But if we are killed in your service, what," exclaimed the deputies of Medina, "will be our reward?" "PARADISE," replied the prophet. "Stretch forth thy hand." He stretched it forth, and they reiterated the oath of allegiance and fidelity. Their treaty was ratified by the people, who unanimously embraced the profession of Islam;

E H A P.
L.

they rejoiced in the exile of the apostle, but they trembled for his safety, and impatiently expected his arrival. After a perilous and rapid journey along the sea-coast, he halted at Koba, two miles from the city, and made his public entry into Medina, sixteen days after his flight from Mecca. Five hundred of the citizens advanced to meet him; he was hailed with acclamations of loyalty and devotion; Mahomet was mounted on a she-camel, an umbrella shaded his head, and a turban was unfurled before him to supply the deficiency of a standard. His bravest disciples, who had been scattered by the storm, assembled round his person: and the equal, though various, merit of the Moslems was distinguished by the names of *Mohagerians* and *Ansars*, the fugitives of Mecca, and the auxiliaries of Medina. To eradicate the seeds of jealousy, Mahomet judiciously coupled his principal followers with the rights and obligations of brethren, and when Ali found himself without a peer, the prophet tenderly declared, that *he* would be the companion and brother of the noble youth. The expedient was crowned with success; the holy fraternity was respected in peace and war, and the two parties vied with each other in a generous emulation of courage and fidelity. Once only the concord was slightly ruffled by an accidental quarrel; a patriot of Medina arraigned the insolence of the strangers, but the hint of their expulsion was heard with abhorrence, and his own son most eagerly

offered to lay at the apostle's feet the head of his father. C H A P.

L.

From his establishment at Medina, Mahomet assumed the exercise of the regal and sacerdotal office; and it was impious to appeal from a judge whose decrees were inspired by the divine wisdom. A small portion of ground, the patri-
His regal
dignity,
A. D.
622—32.

mony of two orphans, was acquired by gift or purchase¹²¹; on that chosen spot, he built an house and a mosch more venerable in their rude simplicity than the palaces and temples of the Assyrian caliphs. His seal of gold, or silver, was inscribed with the apostolic title; when he prayed and preached in the weekly assembly, he leaned against the trunk of a palm-tree; and it was long before he indulged himself in the use of a chair or pulpit of rough timber¹²². After a reign of six years, fifteen hundred Moslems, in arms and in the field, renewed their oath of allegiance; and their chief repeated the assurance of protection till the death of the last member, or the final dissolution of the party. It was in the same camp that the deputy of Mecca was astonished by the attention of the faithful to the works and looks of the prophet, by the eagerness with which they collected his spittle, an hair that dropt on the ground, the refuse water of his lustrations, as if they participated in some degree of the prophetic virtue. "I have seen," said he, "the Chosroes of Persia and the Cæsar of Rome, but never did I behold a king among his subjects like Mahomet among his

CHAPTER.

L.

He declares
war against
the infidels.

“companions.” The devout fervour of enthusiasm acts with more energy and truth than the cold and formal servility of courts.

In the state of nature every man has a right to defend, by force of arms, his person and his possessions; to repel, or even to prevent, the violence of his enemies; and to extend his hostilities to a reasonable measure of satisfaction and retaliation. In the free society of the Arabs, the duties of subject and citizen imposed a feeble restraint; and Mahomet, in the exercise of a peaceful and benevolent mission, had been despoiled and banished by the injustice of his countrymen. The choice of an independent people had exalted the fugitive of Mecca to the rank of a sovereign; and he was invested with the just prerogative of forming alliances, and of waging offensive or defensive war. The imperfection of human rights was supplied and armed by the plenitude of divine power: the prophet of Medina assumed, in his new revelations, a fiercer and more sanguinary tone, which proves that his former moderation was the effect of weakness¹²³: the means of persuasion had been tried, the season of forbearance was elapsed, and he was now commanded to propagate his religion by the sword, to destroy the monuments of idolatry, and, without regarding the sanctity of days or months, to pursue the unbelieving nations of the earth. The same bloody precepts, so repeatedly inculcated in the Koran, are ascribed by the author to the Pentateuch and the Gospel.

But the mild tenor of the evangelic style may explain an ambiguous text, that Jesus did not bring peace on the earth, but a sword: his patient and humble virtues should not be confounded with the intolerant zeal of princes and bishops, who have disgraced the name of his disciples. In the prosecution of religious war, Mahomet might appeal with more propriety to the example of Moses, of the judges and the kings of Israel. The military laws of the Hebrews are still more rigid than those of the Arabian legislator¹²⁴. The Lord of hosts marched in person before the Jews: if a city resisted their summons, the males without distinction, were put to the sword: the seven nations of Canaan were devoted to destruction; and neither repentance nor conversion could shield them from the inevitable doom, that no creature within their precincts should be left alive. The fair option of friendship, or submission, or battle, was proposed to the enemies of Mahomet. If they professed the creed of Islam, they were admitted to all the temporal and spiritual benefits of his primitive disciples, and marched under the same banner to extend the religion which they had embraced. The clemency of the prophet was decided by his interest, yet he seldom trampled on a prostrate enemy; and he seems to promise, that, on the payment of a tribute, the least guilty of his unbelieving subjects might be indulged in their worship, or at least in their imperfect faith. In the first months of his reign, he practised the lessons of holy warfare, and

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displayed his white banner before the gates of Medina: the martial apostle fought in person at nine battles or sieges¹²⁵; and fifty enterprizes of war were atchieved in ten years by himself or his lieutenants. The Arab continued to unite the professions of a merchant and a robber; and his petty excursions for the defence or the attack of a caravan insensibly prepared his troops for the conquest of Arabia. The distribution of the spoil was regulated by a divine law¹²⁶: the whole was faithfully collected in one common mass: a fifth of the gold and silver, the prisoners and cattle, the moveables and immoveables, was reserved by the prophet for pious and charitable uses; the remainder was shared in adequate portions by the soldiers who had obtained the victory or guarded the camp: the rewards of the slain devolved to their widows and orphans; and the encrease of cavalry was encouraged by the allotment of a double share to the horse and to the man. From all sides the roving Arabs were allured to the standard of religion and plunder: the apostle sanctified the licence of embracing the female captives as their wives or concubines; and the enjoyment of wealth and beauty was a feeble type of the joys of paradise prepared for the valiant martyrs of the faith. "The sword," says Mahomet, "is the key of heaven and of hell: a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at

“ the day of judgment his wounds shall be re- CHAP.
 “ splendid as vermillion and odoriferous as musk; L.
 “ and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by
 “ the wings of angels and cherubim.” The in-
 trepid souls of the Arabs were fired with en-
 thusiasm: the picture of the invisible world was
 strongly painted on their imagination; and the
 death which they had always despised became an
 object of hope and desire. The Koran incul-
 cates, in the most absolute sense, the tenets of
 fate and predestination, which would extinguish
 both industry and virtue, if the actions of man
 were governed by his speculative belief. Yet
 their influence in every age has exalted the cou-
 rage of the Saracens and Turks. The first com-
 panions of Mahomet advanced to battle with a
 fearless confidence: there is no danger where
 there is no chance: they were ordained to perish
 in their beds; or they were safe and invulnerable
 amidst the darts of the enemy¹²⁷.

Perhaps the Koreish would have been content His defensive
 with the flight of Mahomet, had they not been wars against
 provoked and alarmed by the vengeance of an the Koreish
 enemy, who could intercept their Syrian trade of Mecca.
 as it passed and repassed through the territory of
 Medina. Abu Sophian himself, with only thirty
 or forty followers, conducted a wealthy caravan
 of a thousand camels: the fortune or dexterity
 of his march escaped the vigilance of Mahomet;
 but the chief of the Koreish was informed that
 the holy robbers were placed in ambush to await
 his return. He dispatched a messenger to his

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brethren of Mecca, and they were roused, by the fear of losing their merchandise and their provisions, unless they hastened to his relief with the military force of the city. The sacred band of Mahomet was formed of three hundred and thirteen Moslems, of whom seventy-seven were fugitives, and the rest auxiliaries: they mounted by turns a train of seventy camels (the camels of Yathreb were formidable in war); but such was the poverty of his first disciples, that only two could appear on horseback in the field ¹²⁸. In the fertile and famous vale of Beder ¹²⁹, three stations from Medina, he was informed by his scouts of the caravan that approached on one side; of the Koreish, one hundred horse, eight hundred and fifty foot, who advanced on the other. After a short debate, he sacrificed the prospect of wealth to the pursuit of glory and revenge; and a slight intrenchment was formed, to cover his troops, and a stream of fresh water that glided through the valley. “O God” he exclaimed as the numbers of the Koreish descended from the hills, “O God, if these are destroyed, by whom wilt thou be worshipped on the earth? — Courage, my children, close your ranks; discharge your arrows, and the day is your own.” At these words he placed himself, with Abubeker, on a throne or pulpit ¹³⁰, and instantly demanded the succour of Gabriel and three thousand angels. His eye was fixed on the field of battle: the Musulmans fainted and were pressed: in that decisive moment the prophet started

Battle of
Beder,
A. D. 623,

from his throne, mounted his horse, and cast a handful of sand into the air; "Let their faces be covered with confusion." Both armies heard the thunder of his voice: their fancy beheld the angelic warriors¹³¹: the Koreish trembled and fled: seventy of the bravest were slain; and seventy captives adorned the first victory of the faithful. The dead bodies of the Koreish were despoiled and insulted: two of the most obnoxious prisoners were punished with death; and the ransom of the others, four thousand drams of silver, compensated in some degree the escape of the caravan. But it was in vain that the camels of Abu Sophian explored a new road through the desert and along the Euphrates: they were overtaken by the diligence of the Mussulmans; and wealthy must have been the prize, if twenty thousand drams could be set apart for the fifth of the apostle. The resentment of the public and private loss stimulated Abu Sophian to collect a body of three thousand men, seven hundred of whom were armed with cuirasses, and two hundred were mounted on horseback: three thousand camels attended his march; and his wife Henda, with fifteen matrons of Mecca, incessantly sounded their timbrels to animate the troops, and to magnify the greatness of Hobal, the most popular deity of the Caaba.^{of Ohud,}
 The standard of God and Mahomet was upheld^{A D. 623,} by nine hundred and fifty believers: the disproportion of numbers was not more alarming than in the field of Beder; and their presumption of victory prevailed against the divine and human

CHAP. L. sense of the apostle. The second battle was fought on mount Ohud, six miles to the north of Medina ¹³²: the Koreish advanced in the form of a crescent; and the right wing of cavalry was led by Caled, the fiercest and most successful of the Arabian warriors. The troops of Mahomet were skilfully posted on the declivity of the hill; and their rear was guarded by a detachment of fifty archers. The weight of their charge impelled and broke the centre of the idolaters; but in the pursuit they lost the advantage of their ground: the archers deserted their station: the Musulmans were tempted by the spoil, disobeyed their general, and disordered their ranks. The intrepid Caled, wheeling his cavalry on their flank and rear, exclaimed, with a loud voice, that Mahomet was slain. He was indeed wounded in the face with a javelin: two of his teeth were shattered with a stone; yet, in the midst of tumult and dismay, he reproached the infidels with the murder of a prophet; and blessed the friendly hand that staunched his blood, and conveyed him to a place of safety. Seventy martyrs died for the sins of the people: they fell, said the apostle, in prayers, each brother embracing his lifeless companion ¹³³: their bodies were mangled by the inhuman females of Mecca; and the wife of Abu Sophian tasted the entrails of Hamza, the uncle of Mahomet. They might applaud their superstition and satiate their fury; but the Musulmans soon rallied in the field, and the Koreish wanted strength or courage to undertake

the siege of Medina. It was attacked the ensuing year by an army of ten thousand enemies; and this third expedition is variously named from the *nations*, which marched under the banner of Abu Sophian, from the *ditch* which was drawn before the city, and a camp of three thousand Musulmans. The prudence of Mahomet declined a general engagement: the valour of Ali was signalized in single combat; and the war was protracted twenty days, till the final separation of the confederates. A tempest of wind, rain, and hail, overturned their tents: their private quarrels were fomented by an insidious adversary; and the Koreish, deserted by their allies, no longer hoped to subvert the throne, or to check the conquests, of their invincible exile¹³⁴.

The choice of Jerusalem for the first kebla of prayer, discovers the early propensity of Mahomet in favour of the Jews; and happy would it have been for their temporal interest, had they recognised, in the Arabian prophet, the hope of Israel and the promised Messiah. Their obstinacy converted his friendship into implacable hatred, with which he pursued that unfortunate people to the last moment of his life: and in the double character of an apostle and a conqueror, his persecution was extended to both worlds¹³⁵. The Kainoka dwelt at Medina under the protection of the city; he seized the occasion of an accidental tumult, and summoned them to embrace his religion, or contend with him in battle. "Alas," replied the trembling Jews, "we are

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The nations,
of the ditch,
A. D. 625,Mahomet
subdues the
Jews of
Arabia,
A. D.
623—627.

C H A P. " ignorant of the use of arms , but we preserve
 L. " in the faith and worship of our fathers ; why
 " wilt thou reduce us to the necessity of a just
 " defence ? " The unequal conflict was terminated
 in fifteen days ; and it was with extreme reluc-
 tance that Mahomet yielded to the importunity
 of his allies , and consented to spare the lives of
 the captives. But their riches were confiscated,
 their arms became more effectual in the hands of
 the Musulmans ; and a wretched colony of seven
 hundred exiles was driven with their wives and
 children to implore a refuge on the confines of
 Syria. The Nadhirites were more guilty, since
 they conspired in a friendly interview to assassinate
 the prophet. He besieged their castle three
 miles from Medina , but their resolute defence
 obtained an honourable capitulation ; and the
 garrison, sounding their trumpets and beating
 their drums , was permitted to depart with the
 honours of war. The Jews had excited and
 joined the war of the Koreish : no sooner had
 the *nations* retired from the *ditch* , than Maho-
 met , without laying aside his armour , marched
 on the same day to extirpate the hostile race of
 the children of Koraidha. After a resistance of
 twenty-five days , they surrendered at discretion.
 They trusted to the intercession of their allies of
 Medina : they could not be ignorant that fanati-
 cism obliterates the feelings of humanity. A ven-
 erable elder , to whose judgment they appealed,
 pronounced the sentence of their death : seven
 hundred Jews were dragged in chains to the

market-place of the city: they descended alive into the grave prepared for their execution and burial; and the apostle beheld with an inflexible eye the slaughter of his helpless enemies. Their sheep and camels were inherited by the Musulmans: three hundred cuirasses, five hundred pikes, a thousand lances, composed the most useful portion of the spoil. Six days journey to the north-east of Medina, the ancient and wealthy town of Chaibar was the seat of the Jewish power in Arabia; the territory, a fertile spot in the desert, was covered with plantations and cattle, and protected by eight castles, some of which were esteemed of impregnable strength. The forces of Mahomet consisted of two hundred horse and fourteen hundred foot: in the succession of eight regular and painful sieges they were exposed to danger, and fatigue, and hunger; and the most undaunted chiefs despaired of the event. The apostle revived their faith and courage by the example of Ali, on whom he bestowed the surname of the Lion of God: perhaps we may believe that an Hebrew champion of gigantic stature was cloven to the chest by his irresistible scymetar; but we cannot praise the modesty of romance, which represents him as tearing from its hinges the gate of a fortress, and wielding the ponderous buckler in his left-hand¹³⁶. After the reduction of the castles, the town of Chaibar submitted to the yoke. The chief of the tribe was tortured, in the presence of Mahomet, to force a confession of his hidden

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treasure: the industry of the shepherds and husbandmen was rewarded with a precarious toleration: they were permitted, so long as it should please the conqueror, to improve their patrimony, in equal shares, for *his* emolument and their own. Under the reign of Omar, the Jews of Chaibar were transplanted to Syria; and the caliph alleged the injunction of his dying master, that one and the true religion should be professed in his native land of Arabia¹³⁷.

Submission
of Mecca,
A. D. 629.

Five times each day the eyes of Mahomet were turned towards Mecca¹³⁸, and he was urged by the most sacred and powerful motives to revisit, as a conqueror, the city and the temple from whence he had been driven as an exile. The Caaba was present to his waking and sleeping fancy: an idle dream was translated into vision and prophecy; he unfurled the holy banner; and a rash promise of success too hastily dropped from the lips of the apostle. His march from Medina to Mecca, displayed the peaceful and solemn pomp of a pilgrimage; seventy camels chosen and bedecked for sacrifice, preceded the van; the sacred territory was respected, and the captives were dismissed without ransom to proclaim his clemency and devotion. But no sooner did Mahomet descend into the plain, within a day's journey of the city, than he exclaimed, "they have clothed themselves with the skins of tygers;" the numbers and resolution of the Koreish opposed his progress; and the roving Arabs of the desert might desert or betray a

leader whom they had followed for the hopes of CHAP.
 spoil. The intrepid fanatic sunk into a cool and L.
 cautious politician: he waved in a treaty his
 title of apostle of God, concluded with the
 Koreish and their allies a truce of ten years,
 engaged to restore the fugitives of Mecca who
 should embrace his religion, and stipulated only,
 for the ensuing year, the humble privilege of
 entering the city as a friend, and of remaining
 three days to accomplish the rites of the pilgrim-
 age. A cloud of shame and sorrow hung on the
 retreat of the Musulmans, and their disappoint-
 ment might justly accuse the failure of a prophet
 who had so often appealed to the evidence of
 success. The faith and hope of the pilgrims were
 rekindled by the prospect of Mecca: their swords
 were sheathed; seven times in the footsteps of
 the apostle they encompassed the Caaba: the
 Koreish had retired to the hills, and Mahomet,
 after the customary sacrifice, evacuated the city
 on the fourth day. The people was edified by
 his devotion; the hostile chiefs were awed or
 divided, or seduced; and both Caled and Amrou,
 the future conquerors of Syria and Egypt, most
 seasonably deserted the sinking cause of idolatry.
 The power of Mahomet was increased by the
 submission of the Arabian tribes; ten thousand
 soldiers were assembled for the conquest of Mecca,
 and the idolaters, the weaker party, were easily
 convicted of violating the truce. Enthusiasm and
 discipline impelled the march and preserved the
 secret, till the blaze of ten thousand fires pro-

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claimed to the astonished Koreish, the design, the approach, and the irresistible force of the enemy. The haughty Abu Sophian presented the keys of the city, admired the variety of arms and ensigns that passed before him in review; observed that the son of Abdallah had acquired a mighty kingdom, and confessed, under the scymetar of Omar, that he was the apostle of the true God. The return of Marius and Sylla was stained with the blood of the Romans; the revenge of Mahomet was stimulated by religious zeal, and his injured followers were eager to execute or to prevent the order of a massacre. Instead of indulging their passions and his own¹³⁹, the victorious exile forgave the guilt, and united the factions, of Mecca. His troops, in three divisions, marched into the city: eight and twenty of the inhabitants were slain by the sword of Caled; eleven men and six women were proscribed by the sentence of Mahomet; but he blamed the cruelty of his lieutenant; and several of the most obnoxious victims were indebted for their lives to his clemency or contempt. The chiefs of the Koreish were prostrate at his feet. "What mercy can you expect from the man
 "whom you have wronged?" "We confide
 "in the generosity of our kinsman." "And you
 "shall not confide in vain: begone! you are safe,
 "you are free." The people of Mecca deserved their pardon by the profession of Islam; and after an exile of seven years, the fugitive missionary was enthroned as the prince and prophet of his
 native

native country ¹⁴⁰. But the three hundred and sixty idols of the Caaba were ignominiously broken; the house of God was purified and adorned; as an example to future times, the apostle again fulfilled the duties of a pilgrim; and a perpetual law was enacted that no unbeliever should dare to set his foot on the territory of the holy city ¹⁴¹.

The conquest of Mecca determined the faith and obedience of the Arabian tribes ¹⁴²; who, according to the vicissitudes of fortune, had obeyed or disregarded the eloquence or the arms of the prophet. Indifference for rites and opinions still marks the character of the Bedowens; and they might accept, as loosely as they hold, the doctrine of the Koran. Yet an obstinate remnant still adhered to the religion and liberty of their ancestors, and the war of Honain derived a proper appellation from the *idols*, whom Mahomet had vowed to destroy, and whom the confederates of Tayef had sworn to defend ¹⁴³. Four thousand pagans advanced with secrecy and speed to surprise the conqueror; they pitied and despised the supine negligence of the Koreish, but they depended on the wishes, and perhaps the aid, of a people who had so lately renounced their gods, and bowed beneath the yoke of their enemy. The banners of Medina and Mecca were displayed by the prophet; a crowd of Bedowens increased the strength or numbers of the army, and twelve thousand Musulmans entertained a rash and sinful presumption of their invincible

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L.

Conquest of
Arabia,
A. D.

629—632.

CHAPTER. strength. They descended without precaution
 L. into the valley of Honain: the heights had been occupied by the archers and slingers of the confederates; their numbers were oppressed, their discipline was confounded, their courage was appalled, and the Koreish smiled at their impending destruction. The prophet, on his white mule, was encompassed by the enemies; he attempted to rush against their spears in search of a glorious death: ten of his faithful companions interposed their weapons and their breasts; three of these fell dead at his feet: "O my brethren," he repeatedly cried with sorrow and indignation, "I am the son of Abdallah, I am the apostle of truth! O man stand fast in the faith! O God send down thy succour!" His uncle Abbás, who, like the heroes of Homer, excelled in the loudness of his voice, made the valley resound with the recital of the gifts and promises of God: the flying Moslems returned from all sides to the holy standard; and Mahomet observed with pleasure, that the furnace was again rekindled: his conduct and example restored the battle, and he animated his victorious troops to inflict a merciless revenge on the authors of their shame. From the field of Honain, he marched without delay to the siege of Tayef, sixty miles to the south-east of Mecca, a fortress of strength, whose fertile lands produce the fruits of Syria in the midst of the Arabian desert. A friendly tribe, instructed (I know not how) in the art of sieges, supplied him with a train of battering rams and military

engines, with a body of five hundred artificers. But it was in vain that he offered freedom to the slaves of Tayef; that he violated his own laws by the extirpation of the fruit-trees; that the ground was opened by the miners; that the breach was assaulted by the troops. After a siege of twenty days, the prophet founded a retreat, but he retreated with a song of devout triumph, and affected to pray for the repentance and safety of the unbelieving city. The spoil of this fortunate expedition amounted to six thousand captives, twenty-four thousand camels, forty thousand sheep, and four thousand ounces of silver: a tribe who had fought at Honain, redeemed their prisoners by the sacrifice of their idols; but Mahomet compensated the loss, by resigning to the soldiers his fifth of the plunder, and wished for their sake, that he possessed as many head of cattle as there were trees in the province of Tehama. Instead of chastising the disaffection of the Koreish, he endeavoured to cut out their tongues (his own expression), and to secure their attachment by a superior measure of liberality: Abu Sophian alone was presented with three hundred camels and twenty ounces of silver; and Mecca was sincerely converted to the profitable religion of the Koran. The *fugitives* and *auxiliaries* complained, that they who had borne the burthen were neglected in the season of victory. "Alas," replied their artful leader, "suffer me to conciliate these recent enemies, these doubtful profelytes, by the gift of some perishable goods."

CHAP. "To your guard I entrust my life and fortunes.
 L. "You are the companions of my exile, of
 "my kingdom, of my paradise." He was
 followed by the deputies of Tayef, who
 dreaded the repetition of a siege. "Grant us,
 "O apostle of God! a truce of three years, with
 "the toleration of our ancient worship." "Not
 "a month, not an hour." "Excuse us at least
 "from the obligation of prayer." "Without
 "prayer religion is of no avail." They submitted
 in silence; their temples were demolished, and
 the same sentence of destruction was executed on
 all the idols of Arabia. His lieutenants, on the
 shores of the Red Sea, the Ocean, and the Gulf
 of Persia, were saluted by the acclamations of a
 faithful people; and the ambassadors who knelt
 before the throne of Medina, were as numerous
 (says the Arabian proverb) as the dates that fall
 from the maturity of a palm-tree. The nation
 submitted to the God and the sceptre of Maho-
 met: the opprobrious name of tribute was abol-
 ished: the spontaneous or reluctant oblations of
 alms and tithes were applied to the service of
 religion: and one hundred and fourteen thousand
 Moslems accompanied the last pilgrimage of the
 apostle ¹⁴⁴.

First war of
 the Maho-
 metans
 against the
 Roman em-
 pire,
 A. D. 629,
 630.

When Heraclius returned in triumph from the
 Persian war, he entertained, at Emesa, one of
 the ambassadors of Mahomet, who invited the
 princes and nations of the earth to the profession
 of Islam. On this foundation the zeal of the
 Arabians has supposed the secret conversion of

the Christian emperor: the vanity of the Greeks has feigned a personal visit of the prince of Medina, who accepted from the royal bounty a rich domain, and a secure retreat, in the province of Syria¹⁴⁵. But the friendship of Heraclius and Mahomet was of short continuance: the new religion had inflamed rather than assuaged the rapacious spirit of the Saracens; and the murder of an envoy afforded a decent pretence for invading, with three thousand foldiers, the territory of Palestine, that extends to the eastward of the Jordan. The holy banner was entrusted to Zeid; and such was the discipline or enthusiasm of the rising sect, that the noblest chiefs served, without reluctance, under the slave of the prophet. On the event of his decease, Jaafar and Abdallah were successively substituted to the command; and if the three should perish in the war, the troops were authorised to elect their general. The three leaders were slain in the battle of Muta¹⁴⁶, the first military action which tried the valour of the Moslems against a foreign enemy. Zeid fell, like a soldier, in the foremost ranks: the death of Jaafar was heroic and memorable; he lost his right-hand; he shifted the standard to his left; the left was severed from his body; he embraced the standard with his bleeding stumps, till he was transfixed to the ground with fifty honourable wounds. “Advance,” cried Abdallah, who stepped into the vacant place, “advance with confidence; either victory or paradise is our own.” The

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lance of a Roman decided the alternative; but the falling standard was rescued by Caled, the profelyte of Mecca: nine swords were broken in his hand; and his valour withstood and repulsed the superior numbers of the Christians. In the nocturnal council of the camp he was chosen to command: his skilful evolutions of the ensuing day secured either the victory or the retreat of the Saracens; and Caled is renowned among his brethren and his enemies by the glorious appellation of the *Sword of God*. In the pulpit, Mahomet described, with prophetic rapture, the crowns of the blessed martyrs; but in private he betrayed the feelings of human nature: he was surprised as he wept over the daughter of Zeid: "What do I see?" said the astonished votary. "You see," replied the apostle, "a friend, who is deploring the loss of his most faithful friend." After the conquest of Mecca the sovereign of Arabia affected to prevent the hostile preparations of Heraclius; and solemnly proclaimed war against the Romans, without attempting to disguise the hardships and dangers of the enterprise¹⁴². The Moslems were discouraged: they alleged the want of money, or horses, or provisions: the season of harvest, and the intolerable heat of the summer: "Hell is much hotter," said the indignant prophet. He disdained to compel their service; but on his return he admonished the most guilty, by an excommunication of fifty days. Their desertion enhanced the merit of Abubeker, Othman, and

the faithful companions who devoted their lives and fortunes; and Mahomet displayed his banner at the head of ten thousand horse and twenty thousand foot. Painful indeed was the distress of the march: lassitude and thirst were aggravated by the scorching and pestilential winds of the desert: ten men rode by turns on the same camel; and they were reduced to the shameful necessity of drinking the water from the belly of that useful animal. In the mid-way, ten days journey from Medina and Damascus, they reposed near the grove and fountain of Tabuc. Beyond that place, Mahomet declined the prosecution of the war: he declared himself satisfied with the peaceful intentions, he was more probably daunted by the martial array, of the emperor of the East. But the active and intrepid Caled spread around the terror of his name; and the prophet received the submission of the tribes and cities, from the Euphrates to Ailah, at the head of the Red Sea. To his Christian subjects, Mahomet readily granted the security of their persons, the freedom of their trade, the property of their goods, and the toleration of their worship¹⁴⁸. The weakness of their Arabian brethren had restrained them from opposing his ambition; the disciples of Jesus were endeared to the enemy of the Jews; and it was the interest of a conqueror to propose a fair capitulation to the most powerful religion of the earth.

Till the age of sixty-three years, the strength of Mahomet was equal to the temporal and

Death of Mahomet,

C H A P. spiritual fatigues of his mission. His epileptic fits,
 L. an absurd calumny of the Greeks, would be an
 A. D. 632. object of pity rather than abhorrence ¹⁴⁹; but
 June 7. he seriously believed that he was poisoned at
 Chaibar by the revenge of a Jewish female ¹⁵⁰.
 During four years, the health of the prophet
 declined; his infirmities encreased; but his mortal
 disease was a fever of fourteen days, which
 deprived him by intervals of the use of reason.
 As soon as he was conscious of his danger, he
 edified his brethren by the humility of his virtue
 or penitence. "If there be any man," said the
 apostle from the pulpit, "whom I have unjustly
 "scourged, I submit my own back to the lash
 "of retaliation. Have I aspersed the reputation
 "of a Musulman? let him proclaim *my* faults in
 "the face of the congregation. Has any one been
 "despoiled of his goods? the little that I possess
 "shall compensate the principal and the interest
 "of the debt." "Yes," replied a voice from
 the crowd, "I am entitled to three drams of
 "silver." Mahomet heard the complaint, satis-
 fied the demand, and thanked his creditor for
 accusing him in this world rather than at the
 day of judgment. He beheld with temperate
 firmness the approach of death; enfranchised his
 slaves (seventeen men, as they are named, and
 eleven women); minutely directed the order of
 his funeral, and moderated the lamentations of
 his weeping friends, on whom he bestowed the
 benediction of peace. Till the third day before
 his death, he regularly performed the function of

public prayer: the choice of Abubeker to supply his place, appeared to mark that ancient and faithful friend as his successor in the sacerdotal and regal office; but he prudently declined the risk and envy of a more explicit nomination. At a moment when his faculties were visibly impaired, he called for pen and ink, to write, or, more properly, to dictate, a divine book, the sum and accomplishment of all his revelations: a dispute arose in the chamber, whether he should be allowed to supersede the authority of the Koran; and the prophet was forced to reprove the indecent vehemence of his disciples. If the slightest credit may be afforded to the traditions of his wives and companions, he maintained, in the bosom of his family, and to the last moments of his life, the dignity of an apostle and the faith of an enthusiast; described the visits of Gabriel, who bade an everlasting farewell to the earth, and expressed his lively confidence, not only of the mercy, but of the favour, of the Supreme Being. In a familiar discourse he had mentioned his special prerogative, that the angel of death was not allowed to take his soul till he had respectfully asked the permission of the prophet. The request was granted; and Mahomet immediately fell into the agony of his dissolution: his head was reclined on the lap of Ayesha, the best beloved of all his wives; he fainted with the violence of pain; recovering his spirits, he raised his eyes towards the roof of the house, and, with a steady look,

CHAP. though a faltering voice, uttered the last broken,
 L. though articulate, words: " O God ! par-
 " don my fins. Yes, I come,
 " among my fellow-citizens on high:" and thus
 peaceably expired on a carpet spread upon the
 floor. An expedition for the conquest of Syria
 was stopped by this mournful event: the army
 halted at the gates of Medina; the chiefs were
 assembled round their dying master. The city,
 more especially the house, of the prophet was a
 scene of clamorous sorrow or silent despair:
 fanaticism alone could suggest a ray of hope and
 consolation. " How can he be dead, our witness,
 " our intercessor, our mediator, with God? By
 " God he is not dead; like Moses and Jesus he
 " is wrapt in a holy trance, and speedily will he
 " return to his faithful people. " The evidence
 of sense was disregarded; and Omar, unsheathing
 his scymetar, threatened to strike off the heads
 of the infidels, who should dare to affirm that
 the prophet was no more. The tumult was
 appeased by the weight and moderation of Abu-
 beker. " Is it Mahomet, " said he to Omar and
 the multitude, " or the God of Mahomet,
 " whom you worship? The God of Mahomet
 " liveth for ever, but the apostle was a mortal
 " like ourselves, and according to his own
 " prediction, he has experienced the common
 " fate of mortality. " He was piously interred
 by the hands of his nearest kinsman, on the
 same spot on which he expired¹⁵¹; Medina has
 been sanctified by the death and burial of Maho-

met; and the innumerable pilgrims of Mecca often turn aside from the way, to bow, in voluntary devotion ¹⁵², before the simple tomb of the prophet ¹⁵³. C H A P.
L.

At the conclusion of the life of Mahomet, it may perhaps be expected, that I should balance his faults and virtues, that I should decide whether the title of enthusiast or impostor more properly belongs to that extraordinary man. Had I been intimately conversant with the son of Abdallah, the task would still be difficult, and the success uncertain; at the distance of twelve centuries, I darkly contemplate his shade through a cloud of religious incense; and could I truly delineate the portrait of an hour, the fleeting resemblance would not equally apply to the solitary of mount Hera, to the preacher of Mecca, and to the conqueror of Arabia. The author of a mighty revolution appears to have been endowed with a pious and contemplative disposition: so soon as marriage had raised him above the pressure of want, he avoided the paths of ambition and avarice; and till the age of forty, he lived with innocence, and would have died without a name. The unity of God is an idea most congenial to nature and reason; and a slight conversation with the Jews and Christians would teach him to despise and detest the idolatry of Mecca. It was the duty of a man and a citizen to impart the doctrine of salvation, to rescue his country from the dominion of sin and error. The energy of a mind incessantly bent on the same

His character.

CHAP. L. object, would convert a general obligation into a particular call; the warm suggestions of the understanding or the fancy, would be felt as the inspirations of heaven; the labour of thought would expire in rapture and vision; and the inward sensation, the invisible monitor, would be described with the form and attributes of an angel of God¹⁵⁴. From enthusiasm to imposture, the step is perilous and slippery: the dæmon of Socrates¹⁵⁵ affords a memorable instance, how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud. Charity may believe that the original motives of Mahomet were those of pure and genuine benevolence; but a human missionary is incapable of cherishing the obstinate unbelievers who reject his claims, despise his arguments, and persecute his life; he might forgive his personal adversaries, he may lawfully hate the enemies of God; the stern passions of pride and revenge were kindled in the bosom of Mahomet, and he sighed, like the prophet of Niniveh, for the destruction of the rebels whom he had condemned. The injustice of Mecca, and the choice of Medina, transformed the citizen into a prince, the humble preacher into the leader of armies; but his sword was consecrated by the example of the saints; and the same God who afflicts a sinful world with pestilence and earthquakes, might inspire for their conversion or chastisement the valour of his servants. In the

exercise of political government, he was compelled to abate of the stern rigour of fanaticism, to comply in some measure with the prejudices and passions of his followers, and to employ even the vices of mankind as the instruments of their salvation. The use of fraud and perfidy, of cruelty and injustice, were often subservient to the propagation of the faith; and Mahomet commanded or approved the assassination of the Jews and idolaters who had escaped from the field of battle. By the repetition of such acts, the character of Mahomet must have been gradually stained; and the influence of such pernicious habits would be poorly compensated by the practice of the personal and social virtues which are necessary to maintain the reputation of a prophet among his sectaries and friends. Of his last years, ambition was the ruling passion; and a politician will suspect, that he secretly smiled (the victorious impostor!) at the enthusiasm of his youth and the credulity of his profelytes¹⁵⁶. A philosopher will observe, that *their* credulity and *his* success, would tend more strongly to fortify the assurance of his divine mission, that his interest and religion were inseparably connected, and that his conscience would be soothed by the persuasion, that he alone was absolved by the Deity from the obligation of positive and moral laws. If he retained any vestige of his native innocence, the sins of Mahomet may be allowed as an evidence of his sincerity. In the support of truth, the arts of fraud and fiction may be deemed less criminal;

C H A P.
L.

and he would have started at the foulness of the means, had he not been satisfied of the importance and justice of the end. Even in a conqueror or a priest, I can surprise a word or action of unaffected humanity; and the decree of Mahomet, that, in the sale of captives, the mothers should never be separated from their children, may suspend or moderate the censure of the historian ¹⁵⁷.

Private life
of Mahomet.

The good sense of Mahomet ¹⁵⁸ despised the pomp of royalty: the apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family: he kindled the fire, swept the floor, milked the ewes, and mended with his own hands his shoes and his woollen garment. Disdaining the penance and merit of an hermit, he observed without effort or vanity, the abstemious diet of an Arab and a soldier. On solemn occasions he feasted his companions with rustic and hospitable plenty; but in his domestic life, many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled on the hearth of the prophet. The interdiction of wine was confirmed by his example; his hunger was appeased with a sparing allowance of barley-bread; he delighted in the taste of milk and honey: but his ordinary food consisted of dates and water. Perfumes and women were the two sensual enjoyments which his nature required and his religion did not forbid: and Mahomet affirmed, that the fervour of his devotion was increased by these innocent pleasures. The heat of the climate inflames the blood of the Arabs; and their libidinous

complexion has been noticed by the writers of antiquity ¹⁵⁹. Their incontinence was regulated by the civil and religious laws of the Koran: their incestuous alliances were blamed, the boundless licence of polygamy was reduced to four legitimate wives or concubines; their rights, both of bed and of dowry, were equitably determined; the freedom of divorce was discouraged, adultery was condemned as a capital offence, and fornication, in either sex, was punished with an hundred stripes ¹⁶⁰. Such were the calm and rational precepts of the legislator; but in his private conduct, Mahomet indulged the appetites of a man, and abused the claims of a prophet. A special revelation dispensed him from the laws which he had imposed on his nation; the female sex, without reserve, was abandoned to his desires; and this singular prerogative excited the envy, rather than the scandal, the veneration, rather than the envy, of the devout Musulmans. If we remember the seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines of the wise Solomon, we shall applaud the modesty of the Arabian who espoused no more than seventeen or fifteen wives; eleven are enumerated who occupied at Medina their separate apartments round the house of the apostle, and enjoyed in their turns the favour of his conjugal society. What is singular enough, they were all widows, excepting only Ayesha, the daughter of Abubeker. *She* was doubtless a virgin, since Mahomet consummated his nuptials (such is the premature ripeness of the climate)

C H A P.
L.

His wives,

C H A P. when she was only nine years of age. The youth,
 L. the beauty, the spirit of Ayesha, gave her a superior ascendant: she was beloved and trusted by the prophet; and, after his death, the daughter of Abubeker was long revered as the mother of the faithful. Her behaviour had been ambiguous and indiscreet: in a nocturnal march, she was accidentally left behind; and in the morning Ayesha returned to the camp with a man. The temper of Mahomet was inclined to jealousy; but a divine revelation assured him of her innocence: he chastised her accusers, and published a law of domestic peace, that no woman should be condemned unless four male witnesses had seen her in the act of adultery ¹⁶¹. In his adventures with Zeineb, the wife of Zeid, and with Mary, an Egyptian captive, the amorous prophet forgot the interest of his reputation. At the house of Zeid, his freedman and adopted son, he beheld, in a loose undress, the beauty of Zeineb, and burst forth into an ejaculation of devotion and desire. The servile, or grateful, freedman understood the hint, and yielded without hesitation to the love of his benefactor. But as the filial relation had excited some doubt and scandal, the angel Gabriel descended from heaven to ratify the deed, to annul the adoption, and gently to reprove the apostle for distrusting the indulgence of his God. One of his wives, Hafna, the daughter of Omar, surprised him on her own bed, in the embraces of his Egyptian captive: she promised secrecy and forgiveness: he swore that
 that

that he would renounce the possession of Mary. C H A P.
L.

Both parties forgot their engagements; and Gabriel again descended with a chapter of the Koran, to absolve him from his oath, and to exhort him freely to enjoy his captives and concubines, without listening to the clamours of his wives. In a solitary retreat of thirty days, he laboured, alone with Mary, to fulfil the commands of the angel. When his love and revenge were satiated, he summoned to his presence his eleven wives, reproached their disobedience and indiscretion, and threatened them with a sentence of divorce, both in this world and in the next: a dreadful sentence, since those who had ascended the bed of the prophet were for ever excluded from the hope of a second marriage. Perhaps the incontinence of Mahomet may be palliated by the tradition of his natural or preternatural gifts ¹⁶²: he united the manly virtue of thirty of the children of Adam; and the apostle might rival the thirteenth labour ¹⁶³ of the Grecian Hercules ¹⁶⁴. A more serious and decent excuse may be drawn from his fidelity to Cadijah. During the twenty-four years of their marriage, her youthful husband abstained from the right of polygamy, and the pride or tenderness of the venerable matron was never insulted by the society of a rival. After her death, he placed her in the rank of the four perfect women, with the sister of Moses, the mother of Jesus, and Fatima, the best beloved of his daughters. "Was she not
"old?" said Ayeshah, with the insolence of a

CHAP. blooming beauty; "has not God given you a
L. "better in her place?" "No, by God," said Mahomet, with an effusion of honest gratitude, "there never can be a better! She believed in
"me, when men despised me; she relieved my
"wants, when I was poor and persecuted by
"the world ¹⁶⁵."

And children

In the largest indulgence of polygamy, the founder of a religion and empire might aspire to multiply the chances of a numerous posterity and a lineal succession. The hopes of Mahomet were fatally disappointed. The virgin Ayesha, and his ten widows of mature age and approved fertility, were barren in his potent embraces. The four sons of Cadijah died in their infancy. Mary, his Egyptian concubine, was endeared to him by the birth of Ibrahim. At the end of fifteen months the prophet wept over his grave; but he sustained with firmness the raillery of his enemies, and checked the adulation or credulity of the Moslems, by the assurance that an eclipse of the sun was *not* occasioned by the death of the infant. Cadijah had likewise given him four daughters, who were married to the most faithful of his disciples: the three eldest died before their father; but Fatima, who possessed his confidence and love, became the wife of her cousin Ali, and the mother of an illustrious progeny. The merit and misfortunes of Ali and his descendants will lead me to anticipate, in this place, the series of the Saracen caliphs, a title which describes the commanders of the faithful as the vicars and successors of the apostle of God ¹⁶⁶.

The birth, the alliance, the character of Ali, which exalted him above the rest of his countrymen, might justify his claim to the vacant throne of Arabia. The son of Abu Taleb was, in his own right, the chief of the family of Hashem, and the hereditary prince or guardian of the city and temple of Mecca. The light of prophecy was extinct; but the husband of Fatima might expect the inheritance and blessing of her father: the Arabs had sometimes been patient of a female reign; and the two grandsons of the prophet had often been fondled in his lap, and shewn in his pulpit, as the hope of his age, and the chief of the youth of paradise. The first of the true believers might aspire to march before them in this world and in the next; and if some were of a graver and more rigid cast, the zeal and virtue of Ali were never outstripped by any recent profelyte. He united the qualifications of a poet, a soldier, and a saint: his wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings¹⁶⁷; and every antagonist, in the combats of the tongue or of the sword, was subdued by his eloquence and valour. From the first hour of his mission, to the last rites of his funeral, the apostle was never forsaken by a generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent, and the faithful Aaron of a second Moses. The son of Abu Taleb was afterwards reproached for neglecting to secure his interest by a solemn declaration of his right, which would have silenced all competition, and sealed his succession by the decrees

C H A P.

L.

Character of
Ali.

CHAP. of heaven. But the unsuspecting hero confided
L. in himself: the jealousy of empire, and perhaps
the fear of opposition, might suspend the resolutions of Mahomet, and the bed of sickness was besieged by the artful Ayesha, the daughter of Abubeker, and the enemy of Ali.

Reign of
Abubeker;
A. D. 632,
June 7.

The silence and death of the prophet restored the liberty of the people; and his companions convened an assembly to deliberate on the choice of his successor. The hereditary claim and lofty spirit of Ali, were offensive to an aristocracy of elders, desirous of bestowing and resuming the sceptre by a free and frequent election: the Koreish could never be reconciled to the proud pre-eminence of the line of Hashem; the ancient discord of the tribes was rekindled; the *fugitives* of Mecca and the *auxiliaries* of Medina asserted their respective merits, and the rash proposal of choosing two independent caliphs would have crushed in their infancy the religion and empire of the Saracens. The tumult was appeased by the disinterested resolution of Omar, who, suddenly renouncing his own pretensions, stretched forth his hand, and declared himself the first subject of the mild and venerable Abubeker. The urgency of the moment, and the acquiescence of the people, might excuse this illegal and precipitate measure; but Omar himself confessed from the pulpit, that if any Musulman should hereafter presume to anticipate the suffrage of his brethren, both the elector and the elected would be worthy of death¹⁶⁸. After the simple inauguration of Abubeker, he was obeyed in

Medina, Mecca, and the provinces of Arabia; the Hasmemites alone declined the oath of fidelity; and their chief, in his own house, maintained, above six months, a fullen and independent reserve; without listening to the threats of Omar, who attempted to consume with fire the habitation of the daughter of the apostle. The death of Fatima, and the decline of his party, subdued the indignant spirit of Ali: he condescended to salute the commander of the faithful, accepted his excuse of the necessity of preventing their common enemies, and wisely rejected his courteous offer of abdicating the government of the Arabians. After a reign of two years, the aged caliph was summoned by the angel of death. In his testament, with the tacit approbation of the companions, he bequeathed the sceptre to the firm and intrepid virtue of Omar. "I have no occasion," said the modest candidate, "for the place." "But the place has occasion for you," replied Abubeker; who expired with a fervent prayer, that the God of Mahomet would ratify his choice, and direct the Musulmans in the way of concord and obedience. The prayer was not ineffectual, since Ali himself, in a life of privacy and prayer, professed to revere the superior worth and dignity of his rival; who comforted him for the loss of empire, by the most flattering marks of confidence and esteem. In the twelfth year of his reign, Omar received a mortal wound from the hand of an assassin: he rejected with equal impar-

C H A P.
L.

of Omar;
A. D 634,
July 24.

C H A P.
L.

of Othman,
A. D. 644,
November 6.

tiality the names of his son and of Ali, refused to load his conscience with the sins of his successor, and devolved on six of the most respectable companions, the arduous task of electing a commander of the faithful. On this occasion, Ali was again blamed by his friends ¹⁶⁹ for submitting his right to the judgment of men, for recognizing their jurisdiction by accepting a place among the six electors. He might have obtained their suffrage, had he deigned to promise a strict and servile conformity, not only to the Koran and tradition, but likewise to the determinations of two *seniors* ¹⁷⁰. With these limitations, Othman, the secretary of Mahomet, accepted the government; nor was it till after the third caliph, twenty-four years after the death of the prophet, that Ali was invested, by the popular choice, with the regal and sacerdotal office. The manners of the Arabians retained their primitive simplicity, and the son of Abu Taleb despised the pomp and vanity of this world. At the hour of prayer, he repaired to the mosch of Medina, clothed in a thin cotton gown, a coarse turban on his head, his slippers in one hand, and his bow in the other, instead of a walking staff. The companions of the prophet and the chiefs of the tribes saluted their new sovereign, and gave him their right hands as a sign of fealty and allegiance.

Discord of
the Turks
and Persians.

The mischiefs that flow from the contests of ambition are usually confined to the times and countries in which they have been agitated.

But the religious discord of the friends and enemies of Ali has been renewed in every age of the Hegira, and is still maintained in the immortal hatred of the Persians and Turks ¹⁷¹. The former, who are branded with the appellation of *Shiites* or sectaries, have enriched the Mahometan creed with a new article of faith; and if Mahomet be the apostle, his companion Ali is the vicar, of God. In their private converse, in their public worship, they bitterly execrate the three usurpers who intercepted his indefeasible right to the dignity of Imam and Caliph; and the name of Omar expresses in their tongue the perfect accomplishment of wickedness and impiety ¹⁷². The *Sonnites*, who are supported by the general consent and orthodox tradition of the Musulmans, entertain a more impartial, or at least a more decent opinion. They respect the memory of Abubeker, Omar, Othman, and Ali, the holy and legitimate successors of the prophet. But they assign the last and most humble place to the husband of Fatima, in the persuasion that the order of succession was determined by the degrees of sanctity ¹⁷³. An historian who balances the four caliphs with a hand unshaken by superstition, will calmly pronounce, that their manners were alike pure and exemplary; that their zeal was fervent, and probably sincere; and that in the midst of riches and power, their lives were devoted to the practice of moral and religious duties. But the public virtues of Abubeker and Omar, the

C H A P.

L.

prudence of the first, the severity of the second, maintained the peace and prosperity of their reigns. The feeble temper and declining age of Othman were incapable of sustaining the weight of conquest and empire. He chose, and he was deceived; he trusted, and he was betrayed: the most deserving of the faithful became useless or hostile to his government, and his lavish bounty was productive only of ingratitude and discontent. The spirit of discord went forth in the provinces, their deputies assembled at Medina, and the Charegites, the desperate fanatics who disclaimed the yoke of subordination and reason, were confounded among the free-born Arabs, who demanded the redress of their wrongs and the punishment of their oppressors. From Cufa, from Bassora, from Egypt, from the tribes of the desert, they rose in arms, encamped about a league from Medina, and dispatched an haughty mandate to their sovereign, requiring him to execute justice, or to descend from the throne. His repentance began to disarm and disperse the insurgents; but their fury was rekindled by the arts of his enemies; and the forgery of a perfidious secretary was contrived to blast his reputation and precipitate his fall. The caliph had lost the only guard of his predecessors, the esteem and confidence of the Moslems; during a siege of six weeks his water and provisions were intercepted, and the feeble gates of the palace were protected only by the scruples of the more timorous rebels. Forsaken by those who had

abused his simplicity, the helpless and venerable caliph expected the approach of death: the brother of Ayesha marched at the head of the assassins; and Othman, with the Koran in his lap, was pierced with a multitude of wounds. A tumultuous anarchy of five days was appeased by the inauguration of Ali; his refusal would have provoked a general massacre. In this painful situation he supported the becoming pride of the chief of the Hashemites; declared that he had rather serve than reign; rebuked the presumption of the strangers; and required the formal, if not the voluntary, assent of the chiefs of the nation. He has never been accused of prompting the assassin of Omar; though Persia indiscreetly celebrates the festival of that holy martyr. The quarrel between Othman and his subjects was assuaged by the early mediation of Ali; and Hassan, the eldest of his sons, was insulted and wounded in the defence of the caliph. Yet it is doubtful whether the father of Hassan was strenuous and sincere in his opposition to the rebels; and it is certain that he enjoyed the benefit of their crime. The temptation was indeed of such magnitude as might stagger and corrupt the most obdurate virtue. The ambitious candidate no longer aspired to the barren sceptre of Arabia; the Saracens had been victorious in the East and West; and the wealthy kingdoms of Persia, Syria, and Egypt, were the patrimony of the commander of the faithful.

C H A P.

L.

Death of
Othman,
A. D. 655,
June 18.

C H A P.

L.

Reign of Ali,

A. D.

655—660.

A life of prayer and contemplation had not chilled the martial activity of Ali; but in a mature age, after a long experience of mankind, he still betrayed in his conduct the rashness and indiscretion of youth. In the first days of his reign, he neglected to secure, either by gifts or fetters, the doubtful allegiance of Telha and Zobeir, two of the most powerful of the Arabian chiefs. They escaped from Medina to Mecca, and from thence to Bassora; erected the standard of revolt; and usurped the government of Irak, or Assyria, which they had vainly solicited as the reward of their services. The mask of patriotism is allowed to cover the most glaring inconsistencies; and the enemies, perhaps the assassins, of Othman now demanded vengeance for his blood. They were accompanied in their flight by Ayesha, the widow of the prophet, who cherished, to the last hour of her life, an implacable hatred against the husband and the posterity of Fatima. The most reasonable Moslems were scandalised, that the mother of the faithful should expose in a camp her person and character; but the superstitious crowd was confident that her presence would sanctify the justice, and assure the success, of their cause. At the head of twenty thousand of his loyal Arabs, and nine thousand valiant auxiliaries of Cufa, the caliph encountered and defeated the superior numbers of the rebels under the walls of Bassora. Their leaders, Telha and Zobeir, were slain in the first battle that stained with civil blood the

arms of the Moslems. After passing through the ranks to animate the troops, Ayesha had chosen her post amidst the dangers of the field. In the heat of the action, seventy men, who held the bridle of her camel, were successively killed or wounded; and the cage or litter in which she sat, was stuck with javelins and darts like the quills of a porcupine. The venerable captive sustained with firmness the reproaches of the conqueror, and was speedily dismissed to her proper station, at the tomb of Mahomet, with the respect and tenderness that was still due to the widow of the apostle. After this victory, which was styled the day of the Camel, Ali marched against a more formidable adversary; against Moawiyah, the son of Abu Sophian, who had assumed the title of caliph, and whose claim was supported by the forces of Syria and the interest of the house of Ommyyah. From the passage of Thapsacus, the plain of Siffin¹⁷⁴ extends along the western bank of the Euphrates. On this spacious and level theatre, the two competitors waged a desultory war of one hundred and ten days. In the course of ninety actions or skirmishes, the loss of Ali was estimated at twenty-five, that of Moawiyah at forty-five, thousand soldiers; and the list of the slain was dignified with the names of five and twenty veterans who had fought at Beder under the standard of Mahomet. In this sanguinary contest, the lawful caliph displayed a superior character of valour and humanity. His troops were strictly enjoined

CHAP. to await the first onset of the enemy, to spare
 L. their flying brethren, and to respect the bodies of
 the dead, and the chastity of the female captives.
 He generously proposed to save the blood of the
 Moslems by a single combat; but his trembling
 rival declined the challenge as a sentence of
 inevitable death. The ranks of the Syrians were
 broken by the charge of a hero who was mounted
 on a piebald horse, and wielded with irresistible
 force his ponderous and two-edged sword. As
 often as he smote a rebel, he shouted the Allah
 Acbar, "God is victorious;" and in the tumult
 of a nocturnal battle, he was heard to repeat
 four hundred times that tremendous exclamation.
 The prince of Damascus already meditated his
 flight, but the certain victory was snatched
 from the grasp of Ali by the disobedience and
 enthusiasm of his troops. Their conscience was
 awed by the solemn appeal to the books of the
 Koran which Moawiyah exposed on the foremost
 lances; and Ali was compelled to yield to a
 disgraceful truce and an insidious compromise.
 He retreated with sorrow and indignation to
 Cufa; his party was discouraged; the distant
 provinces of Persia, of Yemen, and of Egypt,
 were subdued or seduced by his crafty rival;
 and the stroke of fanaticism which was aimed
 against the three chiefs of the nation, was fatal
 only to the cousin of Mahomet. In the temple of
 Mecca, three Charegites or enthusiasts discoursed
 of the disorders of the church and state: they
 soon agreed, that the deaths of Ali, of Moa-

wiyah, and of his friend Amrou, the viceroy of Egypt, would restore the peace and unity of religion. Each of the assassins chose his victim, poisoned his dagger, devoted his life, and secretly repaired to the scene of action. Their resolution was equally desperate, but the first mistook the person of Amrou, and stabbed the deputy who occupied his seat; the prince of Damascus was dangerously hurt by the second; the lawful caliph, in the mosch of Cufa, received a mortal wound from the hand of the third. He expired in the sixty-third year of his age, and mercifully recommended to his children, that they would dispatch the murderer by a single stroke. The sepulchre of Ali ¹⁷⁵ was concealed from the tyrants of the house of Ommyyah ¹⁷⁶; but in the fourth age of the Hegira, a tomb, a temple, a city, arose near the ruins of Cufa ¹⁷⁷. Many thousands of the Shiites repose in holy ground at the feet of the vicar of God; and the desert is vivified by the numerous and annual visits of the Persians, who esteem their devotion not less meritorious than the pilgrimage of Mecca.

The persecutors of Mahomet usurped the inheritance of his children; and the champions of idolatry became the supreme heads of his religion and empire. The opposition of Abu Sophian had been fierce and obstinate; his conversion was tardy and reluctant; his new faith was fortified by necessity and interest; he served, he fought, perhaps he believed; and the sins of the time of ignorance were expiated by the recent

C H A P.

L.

Reign of
 Moawiyah,
 A. D. 655, or
 661---680.

CHAP. L. merits of the family of Ommiyah. Moawiyah, the son of Abu Sophian, and of the cruel Henda, was dignified in his early youth with the office or title of secretary of the prophet: the judgment of Omar entrusted him with the government of Syria; and he administered that important province above forty years either in a subordinate or supreme rank. Without renouncing the fame of valour and liberality, he affected the reputation of humanity and moderation: a grateful people was attached to their benefactor; and the victorious Moslems were enriched with the spoils of Cyprus and Rhodes. The sacred duty of pursuing the assassins of Othman was the engine and pretence of his ambition. The bloody shirt of the martyr was exposed in the mosch of Damascus: the emir deplored the fate of his injured kinsman; and sixty thousand Syrians were engaged in his service by an oath of fidelity and revenge. Amrou, the conqueror of Egypt, himself an army, was the first who saluted the new monarch, and divulged the dangerous secret, that the Arabian caliphs might be created elsewhere than in the city of the prophet¹⁷⁸. The policy of Moawiyah eluded the valour of his rival; and, after the death of Ali, he negotiated the abdication of his son Hassan, whose mind was either above or below the government of the world, and who retired without a fight from the palace of Cufa to an humble cell near the tomb of his grandfather. The aspiring wishes of the caliph were finally crowned by the important

change of an elective to an hereditary kingdom. C H A P.
L.
Some murmurs of freedom or fanaticism attested the reluctance of the Arabs, and four citizens of Medina refused the oath of fidelity; but the designs of Moawiyah were conducted with vigour and address; and his son Yezid, a feeble and dissolute youth, was proclaimed as the commander of the faithful and the successor of the apostle of God.

A familiar story is related of the benevolence of one of the sons of Ali. In serving at table, a slave had inadvertently dropt a dish of scalding broth on his master: the heedless wretch fell prostrate, to deprecate his punishment, and repeated a verse of the Koran: "Paradise is for those who command their anger:" — "I am not angry:" — "and for those who pardon offences:" — "I pardon your offence:" — "and for those who return good for evil:" — "I give you your liberty, and four hundred pieces of silver." With an equal measure of piety, Hosein, the younger brother of Hassan, inherited a remnant of his father's spirit, and served with honour against the Christians in the siege of Constantinople. The primogeniture of the line of Hashem, and the holy character of grandson of the apostle, had centered in his person, and he was at liberty to prosecute his claim against Yezid the tyrant of Damascus, whose vices he despised, and whose title he had never deigned to acknowledge. A list was secretly transmitted from Cusa to Medina, of

Death of
Hosein,
A. D. 680,
October 10.

CHAP. L. one hundred and forty thousand Moslems, who professed their attachment to his cause, and who were eager to draw their swords so soon as he should appear on the banks of the Euphrates. Against the advice of his wisest friends, he resolved to trust his person and family in the hands of a perfidious people. He traversed the desert of Arabia with a timorous retinue of women and children; but as he approached the confines of Irak, he was alarmed by the solitary or hostile face of the country, and suspected either the defection or ruin of his party. His fears were just; Obeidollah, the governor of Cufa, had extinguished the first sparks of an insurrection; and Hosein, in the plain of Kerbela, was encompassed by a body of five thousand horse, who intercepted his communication with the city and the river. He might still have escaped to a fortress in the desert, that had defied the power of Cæsar and Chosroes, and confided in the fidelity of the tribe of Tai, which would have armed ten thousand warriors in his defence. In a conference with the chief of the enemy, he proposed the option of three honourable conditions: that he should be allowed to return to Medina, or be stationed in a frontier garrison against the Turks, or safely conducted to the presence of Yezid. But the commands of the caliph, or his lieutenant, were stern and absolute; and Hosein was informed that he must either submit as a captive and a criminal to the commander of the faithful, or expect the consequences of his rebellion.

rebellion. "Do you think," replied he, "to terrify me with death?" And, during the short respite of a night, he prepared with calm and solemn resignation to encounter his fate. He checked the lamentations of his sister Fatima, who deplored the impending ruin of his house. "Our trust," said Hosein, "is in God alone. All things, both in heaven and earth, must perish and return to their Creator. My brother, my father, my mother, were better than me; and every Musulman has an example in the prophet." He pressed his friends to consult their safety by a timely flight: they unanimously refused to desert or survive their beloved master; and their courage was fortified by a fervent prayer and the assurance of paradise. On the morning of the fatal day, he mounted on horseback, with his sword in one hand and the Koran in the other: his generous band of martyrs consisted only of thirty-two horse and forty foot; but their flanks and rear were secured by the tent-ropes, and by a deep trench which he had filled with lighted faggots, according to the practice of the Arabs. The enemy advanced with reluctance; and one of their chiefs deserted, with thirty followers, to claim the partnership of inevitable death. In every close onset, or single combat, the despair of the Fatimites was invincible; but the surrounding multitudes galled them from a distance with a cloud of arrows, and the horses and men were successively slain: a truce was allowed on both

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fides for the hour prayer; and the battle at length expired by the death of the last of the companions of Hosein. Alone, weary, and wounded, he seated himself at the door of his tent. As he tasted a drop of water, he was pierced in the mouth with a dart: and his son and nephew, two beautiful youths, were killed in his arms. He lifted his hands to heaven, they were full of blood, and he uttered a funeral prayer for the living and the dead. In a transport of despair his sister issued from the tent, and adjured the general of the Cufians, that he would not suffer Hosein to be murdered before his eyes: a tear trickled down his venerable beard; and the boldest of his soldiers fell back on every side as the dying hero threw himself among them. The remorseless Shamer, a name detested by the faithful, reproached their cowardice; and the grandson of Mahomet was slain with three and thirty strokes of lances and swords. After they had trampled on his body, they carried his head to the castle of Cufa, and the inhuman Obeidollah struck him on the mouth with a cane; "Alas!" exclaimed an aged Musulman, "on these lips have I seen the lips of the apostle of God!" In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Hosein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader¹⁷⁹. On the annual festival of his martyrdom, in the devout pilgrimage to his sepulchre, his Persian votaries abandon their souls to the religious frenzy of sorrow and indignation¹⁸⁰.

When the sisters and children of Ali were brought in chains to the throne of Damascus, the caliph was advised to extirpate the enmity of a popular and hostile race, whom he had injured beyond the hope of reconciliation. But Yezid preferred the counsels of mercy; and the mourning family was honourably dismissed to mingle their tears with their kindred at Medina. The glory of martyrdom superseded the right of primogeniture; and the twelve IMAMS¹⁸¹, or pontiffs, of the Persian creed are Ali, Hassan, Hosein, and the lineal descendants of Hosein to the ninth generation. Without arms, or treasures, or subjects, they successively enjoyed the veneration of the people, and provoked the jealousy of the reigning caliphs: their tombs at Mecca or Medina, on the banks of the Euphrates, or in the province of Chorasan, are still visited by the devotion of their sect. Their names were often the pretence of sedition and civil war; but these royal saints despised the pomp of the world, submitted to the will of God and the injustice of man, and devoted their innocent lives to the study and practice of religion. The twelfth and last of the Imams, conspicuous by the title of *Mahadi*, or the Guide, surpassed the solitude and sanctity of his predecessors. He concealed himself in a cavern near Bagdad: the time and place of his death are unknown; and his votaries pretend, that he still lives, and will appear before the day of judgment to overthrow the tyranny of Dejal, or the Antichrist¹⁸². In the

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I.

Posterity of
Mahomet
and Ali.

C H A P. L. lapse of two or three centuries the posterity of Abbas, the uncle of Mahomet, had multiplied to the number of thirty-three thousand ¹⁸³: the race of Ali might be equally prolific; the meanest individual was above the first and greatest of princes; and the most eminent were supposed to excel the perfection of angels. But their adverse fortune, and the wide extent of the Musulman empire, allowed an ample scope for every bold and artful impostor, who claimed affinity with the holy seed: the sceptre of the Almohades in Spain and Afric, of the Fatimites in Egypt and Syria ¹⁸⁴, of the Sultans of Yemen, and of the Sophis of Persia ¹⁸⁵, has been consecrated by this vague and ambiguous title. Under their reigns it might be dangerous to dispute the legitimacy of their birth; and one of the Fatimite caliphs silenced an indiscreet question, by drawing his scymetar: "This," said Moez, "is my pedigree; "and these," casting an handful of gold to his soldiers, "and these are my kindred and my "children." In the various conditions of princes, or doctors, or nobles, or merchants, or beggars, a swarm of the genuine or fictitious descendants of Mahomet and Ali is honoured with the appellation of sheiks, or sherifs, or emirs. In the Ottoman empire, they are distinguished by a green turban, receive a stipend from the treasury, are judged only by their chief, and, however debased by fortune or character, still assert the proud pre-eminence of their birth. A family of three hundred persons, the pure and orthodox

branch of the caliph Hassan, is preserved without taint or suspicion in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and still retains, after the revolutions of twelve centuries, the custody of the temple and the sovereignty of their native land. The fame and merit of Mahomet would ennoble a plebeian race, and the ancient blood of the Koreish transcends the recent majesty of the kings of the earth ¹⁸⁶.

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The talents of Mahomet are entitled to our applause, but his success has perhaps too strongly attracted our admiration. Are we surprised that a multitude of proselytes should embrace the doctrine and the passions of an eloquent fanatic? In the heresies of the church, the same seduction has been tried and repeated from the time of the apostles to that of the reformers. Does it seem incredible that a private citizen should grasp the sword and the sceptre, subdue his native country, and erect a monarchy by his victorious arms? In the moving picture of the dynasties of the East, an hundred fortunate usurpers have arisen from a baser origin, surmounted more formidable obstacles, and filled a larger scope of empire and conquest. Mahomet was alike instructed to preach and to fight, and the union of these opposite qualities, while it enhanced his merit, contributed to his success: the operation of force and persuasion, of enthusiasm and fear, continually acted on each other, till every barrier yielded to their irresistible power. His voice invited the Arabs to freedom and victory, to arms and rapine, to

Success of
Mahomet.

C H A P.
L.

Permanency
of his reli-
gion.

the indulgence of their darling passions in this world and the other; the restraints which he imposed were requisite to establish the credit of the prophet, and to exercise the obedience of the people; and the only objection to his success, was his rational creed of the unity and perfections of God. It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder: the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina, is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries, by the Indian, the African, and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran. If the Christian apostles, St. Peter or St. Paul, could return to the Vatican, they might possibly enquire the name of the Deity who is worshipped with such mysterious rites in that magnificent temple: at Oxford or Geneva, they would experience less surprise; but it might still be incumbent on them to peruse the catechism of the church, and to study the orthodox commentators on their own writings and the words of their master. But the Turkish dome of St. Sophia, with an encrease of splendor and size, represents the humble tabernacle erected at Medina by the hands of Mahomet. The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. "I believe in one God, and Mahomet the apostle of God," is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honours of the prophet have never

transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion. The votaries of Ali have indeed consecrated the memory of their hero, his wife, and his children, and some of the Persian doctors pretend that the divine essence was incarnate in the person of the Imams; but their superstition is universally condemned by the Sonnites; and their impiety has afforded a seasonable warning against the worship of saints and martyrs. The metaphysical questions on the attributes of God, and the liberty of man, have been agitated in the schools of the Mahometans, as well as in those of the Christians; but among the former they have never engaged the passions of the people or disturbed the tranquillity of the state. The cause of this important difference may be found in the separation or union of the regal and sacerdotal characters. It was the interest of the caliphs, the successors of the prophet and commanders of the faithful, to repress and discourage all religious innovations: the order, the temporal and spiritual ambition of the clergy, are unknown to the Moslems; and the sages of the law are the guides of their conscience and the oracles of their faith. From the Atlantic to the Ganges, the Koran is acknowledged as the fundamental code, not only of theology but of civil and criminal jurisprudence: and the laws which regulate the actions and the property of mankind, are guarded by the infallible and immutable sanction of the will

C H A P. of God. This religious servitude is attended with
 L. some practical disadvantage; the illiterate legislator had been often misled by his own prejudices and those of his country; and the institutions of the Arabian desert may be ill-adapted to the wealth and numbers of Ispahan and Constantinople. On these occasions, the Cadhi respectfully places on his head the holy volume, and substitutes a dextrous interpretation more apposite to the principles of equity, and the manners and policy of the times.

His merit
 towards his
 country.

His beneficial or pernicious influence on the public happiness is the last consideration in the character of Mahomet. The most bitter or most bigotted of his Christian or Jewish foes, will surely allow that he assumed a false commission to inculcate a salutary doctrine, less perfect only than their own. He piously supposed, as the basis of his religion, the truth and sanctity of *their* prior revelations, the virtues and miracles of their founders. The idols of Arabia were broken before the throne of God; the blood of human victims was expiated by prayer, and fasting, and alms, the laudable or innocent arts of devotion; and his rewards and punishments of a future life were painted by the images most congenial to an ignorant and carnal generation. Mahomet was perhaps incapable of dictating a moral and political system for the use of his countrymen: but he breathed among the faithful a spirit of charity and friendship, recommended the practice of the social virtues, and checked,

by his laws and precepts, the thirst of revenge and the oppression of widows and orphans. The hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience, and the valour which had been idly spent in domestic quarrels, was vigorously directed against a foreign enemy. Had the impulse been less powerful, Arabia, free at home, and formidable abroad, might have flourished under a succession of her native monarchs. Her sovereignty was lost by the extent and rapidity of conquest. The colonies of the nation were scattered over the East and West, and their blood was mingled with the blood of their converts and captives. After the reign of three caliphs, the throne was transported from Medina to the valley of Damascus and the banks of the Tigris; the holy cities were violated by impious war; Arabia was ruled by the rod of a subject, perhaps of a stranger; and the Bedowens of the desert, awakening from their dream of dominion, resumed their old and solitary independence¹⁸⁷.

C H A P. LI.

The Conquest of Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, by the Arabs or Saracens. — Empire of the Caliphs, or Successors of Mahomet. — State of the Christians, &c. under their Government.

C H A P.

LI.

Union of the
Arabs,

A. D. 632.

THE revolution of Arabia had not changed the character of the Arabs: the death of Mahomet was the signal of independence; and the hasty structure of his power and religion tottered to its foundations. A small and faithful band of his primitive disciples had listened to his eloquence, and shared his distress; had fled with the apostle from the persecution of Mecca, or had received the fugitive in the walls of Medina. The encreasing myriads, who acknowledged Mahomet as their king and prophet, had been compelled by his arms, or allured by his prosperity. The polytheists were confounded by the simple idea of a solitary and invisible God: the pride of the Christians and Jews disdained the yoke of a mortal and contemporary legislator. Their habits of faith and disobedience were not sufficiently confirmed; and many of the new converts regretted the venerable antiquity of the law of Moses, or the rites and mysteries of the Catholic church, or the idols, the sacrifices, the

joyous festivals, of their Pagan ancestors. The jarring interests and hereditary feuds of the Arabian tribes had not yet coalesced in a system of union and subordination; and the Barbarians were impatient of the mildest and most salutary laws that curbed their passions, or violated their customs. They submitted with reluctance to the religious precepts of the Koran, the abstinence from wine, the fast of the Ramadan, and the daily repetition of five prayers; and the alms and titles, which were collected for the treasury of Medina, could be distinguished only by a name from the payment of a perpetual and ignominious tribute. The example of Mahomet had excited a spirit of fanaticism or imposture, and several of his rivals presumed to imitate the conduct and defy the authority of the living prophet. At the head of the *fugitives* and *auxiliaries*, the first caliph was reduced to the cities of Mecca, Medina, and Tayef; and perhaps the Koreish would have restored the idols of the Caaba, if their levity had not been checked by a seasonable reproof. “Ye men of Mecca, will ye be the last
 “ to embrace and the first to abandon the religion
 “ of Islam?” After exhorting the Moslems to confide in the aid of God and his apostle, Abubeker resolved, by a vigorous attack, to prevent the junction of the rebels. The women and children were safely lodged in the cavities of the mountains: the warriors, marching under eleven banners, diffused the terror of their arms; and the appearance of a military force revived

C H A P. and confirmed the loyalty of the faithful. The
 LI. inconstant tribes accepted, with humble repentance, the duties of prayer, and fasting, and alms; and, after some examples of success and severity, the most daring apostates fell prostrate before the sword of the Lord and of Caled. In the fertile province of Yemanah¹, between the Red Sea and the Gulph of Persia, in a city not inferior to Medina itself, a powerful chief, his name was Moseilama, had assumed the character of a prophet, and the tribe of Hanifa listened to his voice. A female prophetess was attracted by his reputation: the decencies of words and actions were spurned by these favourites of heaven²; and they employed several days in mystic and amorous converse. An obscure sentence of his Koran, or book, is yet extant³; and, in the pride of his mission, Moseilama condescended to offer a partition of the earth. The proposal was answered by Mahomet with contempt; but the rapid progress of the impostor awakened the fears of his successor: forty thousand Moslems were assembled under the standard of Caled; and the existence of their faith was resigned to the event of a decisive battle. In the first action, they were repulsed with the loss of twelve hundred men; but the skill and perseverance of their general prevailed: their defeat was avenged by the slaughter of ten thousand infidels; and Moseilama himself was pierced by an Ethiopian slave with the same javelin which had mortally wounded the uncle of Mahomet. The various

rebels of Arabia, without a chief or a cause, were speedily suppressed by the power and discipline of the rising monarchy; and the whole nation again professed, and more steadfastly held, the religion of the Koran. The ambition of the caliphs provided an immediate exercise for the restless spirit of the Saracens: their valour was united in the prosecution of an holy war; and their enthusiasm was equally confirmed by opposition and victory.

From the rapid conquests of the Saracens a presumption will naturally arise, that the first caliphs commanded in person the armies of the faithful, and fought the crown of martyrdom in the foremost ranks of the battle. The courage of Abubeker[†], Omar[†], and Othman[†], had indeed been tried in the persecution and wars of the prophet; and the personal assurance of paradise must have taught them to despise the pleasures and dangers of the present world. But they ascended the throne in a venerable or mature age, and esteemed the domestic cares of religion and justice the most important duties of a sovereign. Except the presence of Omar at the siege of Jerusalem, their longest expeditions were the frequent pilgrimage from Medina to Mecca; and they calmly received the tidings of victory as they prayed or preached before the sepulchre of the prophet. The austere and frugal measure of their lives was the effect of virtue or habit, and the pride of their simplicity insulted the vain magnificence of the kings of the earth. When

Character of
their caliphs.

C H A P. Abubeker assumed the office of caliph, he en-
 LI. joined his daughter Ayesha to take a strict account of his private patrimony, that it might be evident whether he were enriched or impoverished by the service of the state. He thought himself entitled to a stipend of three pieces of gold, with the sufficient maintenance of a single camel and a black slave; but on the Friday of each week, he distributed the residue of his own and the public money, first to the most worthy, and then to the most indigent, of the Moslems. The remains of his wealth, a coarse garment, and five pieces of gold, were delivered to his successor, who lamented with a modest sigh his own inability to equal such an admirable model. Yet the abstinence and humility of Omar were not inferior to the virtues of Abubeker; his food consisted of barley-bread or dates; his drink was water; he preached in a gown that was torn or tattered in twelve places; and a Persian satrap who paid his homage to the conqueror, found him asleep among the beggars on the steps of the mosch of Medina. Oeconomy is the source of liberality, and the encrease of the revenue enabled Omar to establish a just and perpetual reward for the past and present services of the faithful. Careless of his own emolument, he assigned to Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, the first and most ample allowance of twenty-five thousand drams or pieces of silver. Five thousand were allotted to each of the aged warriors, the relics of the field of Beder, and

the last and meanest of the companions of Mahomet was distinguished by the annual reward of three thousand pieces. One thousand was the stipend of the veterans who had fought in the first battles against the Greeks and Persians, and the decreasing pay, as low as fifty pieces of silver, was adapted to the respective merit and seniority of the soldiers of Omar. Under his reign, and that of his predecessor, the conquerors of the East, were the trusty servants of God and the people: the mass of the public treasure was consecrated to the expences of peace and war; a prudent mixture of justice and bounty, maintained the discipline of the Saracens, and they united, by a rare felicity, the dispatch and execution of despotism, with the equal and frugal maxims of a republican government. The heroic courage of Ali⁷, the consummate prudence of Moawiyah⁸, excited the emulation of their subjects; and the talents which had been exercised in the school of civil discord, were more usefully applied to propagate the faith and dominion of the prophet. In the sloth and vanity of the palace of Damascus, the succeeding princes of the house of Ommiyah were alike destitute of the qualifications of statesmen and of saints⁹. Yet the spoils of unknown nations were continually laid at the foot of their throne, and the uniform ascent of the Arabian greatness must be ascribed to the spirit of the nation rather than the abilities of their chiefs. A large deduction must be allowed for the weakness of their

C H A P.

LI.

C H A P. enemies. The birth of Mahomet was fortunately
 LI. placed in the most degenerate and disorderly
 period of the Persians, the Romans, and the Bar-
 barians of Europe: the empires of Trajan, or
 even of Constantine or Charlemagne, would
 have repelled the assault of the naked Saracens,
 and the torrent of fanaticism might have been
 obscurely lost in the sands of Arabia.

Their con-
 quests.

In the victorious days of the Roman republic,
 it had been the aim of the senate to confine their
 counsels and legions to a single war, and
 completely to suppress a first enemy before they
 provoked the hostilities of a second. These timid
 maxims of policy were disdained by the magna-
 nimity or enthusiasm of the Arabian caliphs.
 With the same vigour and success they invaded
 the successors of Augustus and those of Artaxer-
 xes; and the rival monarchies at the same instant
 became the prey of an enemy whom they had been
 so long accustomed to despise. In the ten years of
 the administration of Omar, the Saracens reduced
 to his obedience thirty-six thousand cities or cast-
 les, destroyed four thousand churches or temples
 of the unbelievers, and edified fourteen hundred
 moschs for the exercise of the religion of Maho-
 met. One hundred years after his flight from
 Mecca, the arms and the reign of his successors
 extended from India to the Atlantic Ocean,
 over the various and distant provinces, which
 may be comprised under the names of, I. Persia;
 II. Syria; III. Egypt; IV. Africa; and, V. Spain.
 Under this general division, I shall proceed to
 unfold

unfold these memorable transactions; dispatching with brevity the remote and less interesting conquests of the East, and reserving a fuller narrative for those domestic countries, which had been included within the pale of the Roman empire. Yet I must excuse my own defects by a just complaint of the blindness and insufficiency of my guides. The Greeks, so loquacious in controversy, have not been anxious to celebrate the triumphs of their enemies ¹⁰. After a century of ignorance, the first annals of the Musulmans were collected in a great measure from the voice of tradition ¹¹. Among the numerous productions of Arabic and Persian literature ¹², our interpreters have selected the imperfect sketches of a more recent age ¹³. The art and genius of history have ever been unknown to the Asiatics ¹⁴; they are ignorant of the laws of criticism; and our monkish chronicles of the same period may be compared to their most popular works, which are never vivified by the spirit of philosophy and freedom. The *Oriental library* of a Frenchman ¹⁵ would instruct the most learned musti of the East; and perhaps the Arabs might not find in a single historian, so clear and comprehensive a narrative of their own exploits, as that which will be deduced in the ensuing sheets.

I. In the first year of the first caliph, his lieutenant Caled, the sword of God, and the scourge of the infidels, advanced to the banks of the Euphrates, and reduced the cities of Anbar and Hira. Westward of the ruins of Babylon, a

Invasion of
Persia,
A. D. 632,

CHAP. tribe of sedentary Arabs had fixed themselves
 LI. on the verge of the desert; and Hira was the
 seat of a race of kings who had embraced the
 Christian religion, and reigned above six hundred
 years under the shadow of the throne of Persia¹⁶.
 The last of the Mondars was defeated and slain
 by Caled; his son was sent a captive to Medina;
 his nobles bowed before the successor of the
 prophet; the people was tempted by the exam-
 ple and success of their countrymen; and the
 caliph accepted as the first fruits of foreign
 conquest, an annual tribute of seventy thousand
 pieces of gold. The conquerors, and even their
 historians, were astonished by the dawn of their
 future greatness: "In the same year," says
 Elmacin, "Caled fought many signal battles;
 "an immense multitude of the infidels was
 "slaughtered; and spoils, infinite and innumer-
 "able, were acquired by the victorious Mos-
 "lems¹⁷." But the invincible Caled was soon
 transferred to the Syrian war: the invasion of
 the Persian frontier was conducted by less active
 or less prudent commanders: the Saracens were
 repulsed with loss in the passage of the Euphra-
 tes; and, though they chastised the insolent
 pursuit of the Magians, their remaining forces
 still hovered in the desert of Babylon.

Battle of
 Cadesia,
 A. D. 636,

The indignation and fears of the Persians
 suspended for a moment their intestine divisions.
 By the unanimous sentence of the priests and
 nobles, their queen Arzema was deposed; the
 sixth of the transient usurpers, who had arisen

and vanished in three or four years, since the death of Chosroes and the retreat of Heraclius. Her tiara was placed on the head of Yezdegerd, the grandson of Chosroes; and the same æra, which coincides with an astronomical period¹⁸, has recorded the fall of the Sassanian dynasty and the religion of Zoroaster¹⁹. The youth and inexperience of the prince, he was only fifteen years of age, declined a perilous encounter: the royal standard was delivered into the hands of his general Rustam; and a remnant of thirty thousand regular troops was swelled in truth, or in opinion, to one hundred and twenty thousand subjects, or allies, of the great king. The Moslems, whose numbers were reinforced from twelve to thirty thousand, had pitched their camp in the plains of Cadesia²⁰: and their line, though it consisted of fewer *men*, could produce more *soldiers* than the unwieldy host of the infidels. I shall here observe what I must often repeat, that the charge of the Arabs was not like that of the Greeks and Romans, the effort of a firm and compact infantry: their military force was chiefly formed of cavalry and archers; and the engagement, which was often interrupted and often renewed by single combats and flying skirmishes, might be protracted without any decisive event to the continuance of several days. The periods of the battle of Cadesia were distinguished by their peculiar appellations. The first, from the well-timed appearance of six thousand of the Syrian brethren, was denominated

C H A P. the day of *succour*. The day of *concussion* might
 LI. express the disorder of one, or perhaps of both,
 of the contending armies. The third, a nocturnal
 tumult, received the whimsical name of the
 night of *barking*, from the discordant clamours,
 which were compared to the inarticulate sounds
 of the fiercest animals. The morning of the suc-
 ceeding day determined the fate of Persia; and
 a seasonable whirlwind drove a cloud of dust
 against the faces of the unbelievers. The clangor
 of arms was re-echoed to the tent of Rustam,
 who, far unlike the ancient hero of his name,
 was gently reclining in a cool and tranquil shade,
 amidst the baggage of his camp, and the train
 of mules that were laden with gold and silver.
 On the sound of danger he started from his
 couch; but his flight was overtaken by a valiant
 Arab, who caught him by the foot, struck off
 his head, hoisted it on a lance, and instantly
 returning to the field of battle, carried slaughter
 and dismay among the thickest ranks of the Per-
 sians. The Saracens confess a loss of seven thou-
 sand five hundred men; and the battle of Cadesia
 is justly described by the epithets of obstinate
 and atrocious²¹. The standard of the monarchy
 was overthrown and captured in the field — a
 leathern apron of a blacksmith, who, in ancient
 times, had arisen the deliverer of Persia; but
 this badge of heroic poverty was disguised, and
 almost concealed by a profusion of precious
 gems²². After this victory, the wealthy province
 of Irak or Assyria submitted to the caliph, and

his conquests were firmly established by the speedy foundation of Bassora²³, a place which ever commands the trade and navigation of the Persians. At the distance of fourscore miles from the Gulf, the Euphrates and Tigris unite in a broad and direct current, which is aptly styled the river of the Arabs. In the mid-way, between the junction and the mouth of these famous streams, the new settlement was planted on the western bank: the first colony was composed of eight hundred Moslems; but the influence of the situation soon reared a flourishing and populous capital. The air, though excessively hot, is pure and healthy: the meadows are filled with palm-trees and cattle; and one of the adjacent vallies has been celebrated among the four paradises or gardens of Asia. Under the first caliphs, the jurisdiction of this Arabian colony extended over the southern provinces of Persia: the city has been sanctified by the tombs of the companions and martyrs; and the vessels of Europe still frequent the port of Bassora, as a convenient station and passage of the Indian trade.

CHAP.
LI.

Foundation
of Bassora.

After the defeat of Cadesia, a country intersected by rivers and canals might have opposed an insuperable barrier to the victorious cavalry; and the walls of Ctesiphon or Madayn, which had resisted the battering-rams of the Romans, would not have yielded to the darts of the Saracens. But the flying Persians were overcome by the belief, that the last day of their religion and empire was at hand: the strongest posts

Sack of Madayn,
A. D. 637,
March.

CHAP.
LI.

were abandoned by treachery or cowardice; and the king, with a part of his family and treasures, escaped to Holwan at the foot of the Median hills. In the third month after the battle, Said, the lieutenant of Omar, passed the Tigris without opposition; the capital was taken by assault; and the disorderly resistance of the people gave a keener edge to the sabres of the Moslems, who shouted with religious transport, “this is the white palace of Chosroes, this is the promise of the apostle of God!” The naked robbers of the desert were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope or knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new treasure secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed; the gold and silver, the various wardrobes and precious furniture, surpassed (says Abulfeda) the estimate of fancy or numbers; and another historian defines the untold and almost infinite mass, by the fabulous computation of three thousands of thousands of thousands of pieces of gold²⁴. Some minute though curious facts represent the contrast of riches and ignorance. From the remote islands of the Indian Ocean, a large provision of camphire²⁵ had been imported, which is employed with a mixture of wax to illuminate the palaces of the East. Strangers to the name and properties of that odoriferous gum, the Saracens, mistaking it for salt, mingled the camphire in their bread, and were astonished at the bitterness of the taste. One of the apartments of the palace was decorated with a carpet of silk, sixty cubits in

length, and as many in breadth: a paradise or garden was depicted on the ground; the flowers, fruits, and shrubs were imitated by the figures of the gold embroidery, and the colours of the precious stones; and the ample square was encircled by a variegated and verdant border. The Arabian general persuaded his soldiers to relinquish their claim, in the reasonable hope, that the eyes of the caliph would be delighted with the splendid workmanship of nature and industry. Regardless of the merit of art and the pomp of royalty, the rigid Omar divided the prize among his brethren of Medina: the picture was destroyed; but such was the intrinsic value of the materials, that the share of Ali alone was sold for twenty thousand drams. A mule that carried away the tiara and cuirass, the belt and bracelets of Chosroes, was overtaken by the pursuers; the gorgeous trophy was presented to the commander of the faithful, and the gravest of the companions condescended to smile when they beheld the white beard, hairy arms, and uncouth figure of the veteran, who was invested with the spoils of the great king". The sack of Ctesiphon was followed by its desertion and gradual decay. The Saracens disliked the air and situation of the place, and Omar was advised by his general to remove the seat of government to the western side of the Euphrates. In every age the foundation and ruin of the Assyrian cities has been easy and rapid; the country is destitute of stone and timber, and the most

Foundation
of Cufa.

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solid structures²⁷ are composed of bricks baked in the sun, and joined by a cement of the native bitumen. The name of *Cufa*²⁸ describes an habitation of reeds and earth; but the importance of the new capital was supported by the numbers, wealth, and spirit of a colony of veterans; and their licentiousness was indulged by the wisest caliphs who were apprehensive of provoking the revolt of an hundred thousand swords: "Ye men of Cufa," said Ali, who solicited their aid, "you have been always conspicuous by your valour. You conquered the Persian king, and scattered his forces, till you had taken possession of his inheritance." This mighty conquest was achieved by the battles of Jalula and Nehavend. After the loss of the former, Yezdegerd fled from Holwan, and concealed his shame and despair in the mountains of Farsistan, from whence Cyrus had descended with his equal and valiant companions. The courage of the nation survived that of the monarch; among the hills to the south of Ecbatana or Hamadan, one hundred and fifty thousand Persians made a third and final stand for their religion and country; and the decisive battle of Nehavend was styled by the Arabs the victory of victories. If it be true that the flying general of the Persians was stopt and overtaken in a crowd of mules and camels laden with honey, the incident, however slight or singular, will denote the luxurious impediments of an Oriental army²⁹.

The geography of Persia is darkly delineated

by the Greeks and Latins; but the most illustrious of her cities appear to be more ancient than the invasion of the Arabs. By the reduction of Hamadan and Ispahan, of Caswin, Tauris, and Rei, they gradually approached the shores of the Caspian Sea; and the orators of Mecca might applaud the success and spirit of the faithful, who had already lost sight of the northern bear, and had almost transcended the bounds of the habitable world³⁰. Again turning towards the West and the Roman empire, they repassed the Tigris over the bridge of Mosul, and, in the captive provinces of Armenia and Mesopotamia, embraced their victorious brethren of the Syrian army. From the Palace of Madayn their Eastern progress was not less rapid or extensive. They advanced along the Tigris and the Gulf; penetrated through the passes of the mountains into the valley of Estachar or Persepolis; and profaned the last sanctuary of the Magian empire. The grandson of Chosroes was nearly surprised among the falling columns and mutilated figures; a sad emblem of the past and present fortune of Persia³¹: he fled with accelerated haste over the desert of Kirman, implored the aid of the warlike Segestans, and sought an humble refuge on the verge of the Turkish and Chinese power. But a victorious army is insensible of fatigue: the Arabs divided their forces in the pursuit of a timorous enemy; and the caliph Othman promised the government of Chorasán to the first general who should enter that large

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Conquest, of

Persia,

A. D.

637—651.

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and populous country, the kingdom of the ancient Bactrians. The condition was accepted; the prize was deserved; the standard of Mahomet was planted on the walls of Herat, Merou, and Balch; and the successful leader neither halted nor reposed till his foaming cavalry had tasted the waters of the Oxus. In the public anarchy, the independent governors of the cities and castles obtained their separate capitulations: the terms were granted or imposed by the esteem, the prudence, or the compassion, of the victors; and a simple profession of faith established the distinction between a brother and a slave. After a noble defence, Harmozan, the prince or satrap of Ahwaz and Susa, was compelled to surrender his person and his state to the discretion of the caliph; and their interview exhibits a portrait of the Arabian manners. In the presence, and by the command, of Omar, the gay Barbarian was despoiled of his silken robes embroidered with gold, and of his tiara bedecked with rubies and emeralds: "Are you now sensible," said the conqueror to his naked captive, "are you now
 "sensible of the judgment of God, and of the
 "different rewards of infidelity and obedience?"
 "Alas!" replied Harmozan, "I feel them too
 "deeply. In the days of our common ignorance,
 "we fought with the weapons of the flesh, and
 "my nation was superior. God was then neuter:
 "since he has espoused your quarrel, you have
 "subverted our kingdom and religion." Oppressed by this painful dialogue, the Persian

complained of intolerable thirst, but discovered some apprehension lest he should be killed whilst he was drinking a cup of water. "Be of good courage," said the caliph, "your life is safe till you have drank this water:" the crafty satrap accepted the assurance, and instantly dashed the vase against the ground. Omar would have avenged the deceit; but his companions represented the sanctity of an oath; and the speedy conversion of Harmozan entitled him not only to a free pardon, but even to a stipend of two thousand pieces of gold. The administration of Persia was regulated by an actual survey of the people, the cattle, and the fruits of the earth³²; and this monument which attests the vigilance of the caliphs, might have instructed the philosophers of every age³³.

The flight of Yezdegerd had carried him beyond the Oxus, and as far as the Jaxartes, two rivers³⁴ of ancient and modern renown, which descend from the mountains of India towards the Caspian Sea. He was hospitably entertained by Tarkhan, prince of Fargana³⁵, a fertile province on the Jaxartes; the king of Samarcand, with the Turkish tribes of Sogdiana and Scythia, were moved by the lamentations and promises of the fallen monarch; and he solicited by a suppliant embassy, the more solid and powerful friendship of the emperor of China³⁶. The virtuous Tait-song³⁷, the first of the dynasty of the Tang, may be justly compared with the Antonines of Rome: his people enjoyed the blessings of prosperity and

Death of the
last king,
A. D. 654.

e H A P. [LI.] peace; and his dominion was acknowledged by forty-four hords of the Barbarians of Tartary. His last garrisons of Cassigar and Khoten maintained a frequent intercourse with their neighbours of the Jaxartes and Oxus; a recent colony of Persians had introduced into China the astronomy of the Magi; and Taitsong might be alarmed by the rapid progress and dangerous vicinity of the Arabs. The influence, and perhaps the supplies, of China revived the hopes of Yezdegerd and the zeal of the worshippers of fire; and he returned with an army of Turks to conquer the inheritance of his fathers. The fortunate Moslems, without unsheathing their swords, were the spectators of his ruin and death. The grandson of Chosroes was betrayed by his servant, insulted by the seditious inhabitants of Merou, and oppressed, defeated, and pursued, by his Barbarian allies. He reached the banks of a river, and offered his rings and bracelets for an instant passage in a miller's boat. Ignorant or insensible of royal distress, the rustic replied, that four drams of silver were the daily profit of his mill, and that he would not suspend his work unless the loss were repaid. In this moment of hesitation and delay, the last of the Sassanian kings was overtaken and slaughtered by the Turkish cavalry, in the nineteenth year of his unhappy reign³⁸. His son Firuz, an humble client of the Chinese emperor, accepted the station of captain of his guards; and the Magian worship was long preserved by a colony of loyal

exiles in the province of Bucharía. His grandson inherited the regal name; but after a faint and fruitless enterprise, he returned to China, and ended his days in the palace of Sigan. The male line of the Sassanides was extinct; but the female captives, the daughters of Persia, were given to the conquerors in servitude or marriage; and the race of the caliphs and imams was ennobled by the blood of their royal mothers ³⁹.

After the fall of the Persian kingdom, the river Oxus divided the territories of the Saracens and of the Turks. This narrow boundary was soon overleaped by the spirit of the Arabs: the governors of Chorasan extended their successive inroads; and one of their triumphs was adorned with the buskin of a Turkish queen, which she dropt in her precipitate flight beyond the hills of Bochara ⁴⁰. But the final conquest of Tranfoxiana ⁴¹, as well as of Spain, was reserved for the glorious reign of the inactive Walid; and the name of Catibah, the camel-driver, declares the origin and merit of his successful lieutenant. While one of his colleagues displayed the first Mahometan banner on the banks of the Indus, the spacious regions between the Oxus, the Jaxartes, and the Caspian Sea, were reduced by the arms of Catibah to the obedience of the prophet and of the caliph ⁴². A tribute of two millions of pieces of gold was imposed on the infidels: their idols were burnt or broken; the Musulman chief pronounced a sermon in the new mosch of Carizme; after several battles, the Turkish hords were driven

The conquest
of Trans-
oxiana,
A. D. 710.

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back to the desert; and the emperors of China solicited the friendship of the victorious Arabs. To their industry, the prosperity of the province, the Sogdiana of the ancients, may in a great measure be ascribed; but the advantages of the soil and climate had been understood and cultivated since the reign of the Macedonian kings. Before the invasion of the Saracens, Carizme, Bocara, and Samarcand, were rich and populous under the yoke of the shepherds of the north. These cities were surrounded with a double wall; and the exterior fortification, of a larger circumference, inclosed the fields and gardens of the adjacent district. The mutual wants of India and Europe were supplied by the diligence of the Sogdian merchants; and the inestimable art of transforming linen into paper, has been diffused from the manufacture of Samarcand over the western world⁴³.

Invasion of
SYRIA,
A. D. 632,

II. No sooner had Abubeker restored the unity of faith and government, than he dispatched a circular letter to the Arabian tribes. “ In the name of the most merciful God, to the
“ rest of the true believers. Health and happiness,
“ and the mercy and blessing of God be upon
“ you. I praise the most high God, and I pray
“ for his prophet Mahomet. This is to acquaint
“ you, that I intend to send the true believers
“ into Syria “ to take it out of the hands of
“ the infidels. And I would have you know,
“ that the fighting for religion is an act of
“ obedience to God. ” His messengers returned

with the tidings of pious and martial ardour which they had kindled in every province; and the camp of Medina was successively filled with the intrepid bands of the Saracens, who panted for action, complained of the heat of the season and the scarcity of provisions; and accused with impatient murmurs the delays of the caliph. As soon as their numbers were complete, Abubeker ascended the hill, reviewed the men, the horses, and the arms, and poured forth a fervent prayer for the success of their undertaking. In person, and on foot, he accompanied the first day's march; and when the blushing leaders attempted to dismount, the caliph removed their scruples by a declaration, that those who rode, and those who walked, in the service of religion, were equally meritorious. His instruction "to the chiefs of the Syrian army, were inspired by the warlike fanaticism which advances to seize, and affects to despise, the objects of earthly ambition. "Remember," said the successor of the prophet, "that you are always in the presence of God, "on the verge of death, in the assurance of "judgment, and the hope of paradise. Avoid "injustice and oppression; consult with your "brethren, and study to preserve the love and "confidence of your troops. When you fight "the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like "men, without turning your backs; but let not "victory be stained with the blood of women "or children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn "any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees,

C H A P. " nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as
 LI. " you kill to eat. When you make any covenant
 " or article, stand to it, and be as good as your
 " word. As you go on, you will find some
 " religious persons who live retired in monas-
 " teries, and propose to themselves to serve God
 " that way: let them alone, and neither kill
 " them nor destroy their monasteries ": And
 " you will find another sort of people that
 " belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have
 " shaven crowns " ; be sure you cleave their
 " skulls, and give them no quarter till they
 " either turn Mahometans or pay tribute. " All
 profane or frivolous conversation, all dangerous
 recollection of ancient quarrels was severely pro-
 hibited among the Arabs; in the tumult of a
 camp, the exercises of religion were assiduously
 practised; and the intervals of action were em-
 ployed in prayer, meditation, and the study of
 the Koran. The abuse, or even the use, of
 wine was chastised by fourscore strokes on the
 soles of the feet, and in the fervour of their
 primitive zeal many secret sinners revealed their
 fault, and solicited their punishment. After some
 hesitation the command of the Syrian army was
 delegated to Abu Obeidah, one of the fugitives
 of Mecca and companions of Mahomet; whose
 zeal and devotion were assuaged, without being
 abated, by the singular mildness and benevolence
 of his temper. But in all the emergencies of
 war, the foldiers demanded the superior genius
 of Caled; and whoever might be the choice of
 the

the prince, the *sword of God* was both in fact and fame the foremost leader of the Saracens. He obeyed without reluctance; he was consulted without jealousy; and such was the spirit of the man, or rather of the times, that Caled professed his readiness to serve under the banner of the faith, though it were in the hands of a child or an enemy. Glory, and riches, and dominion, were indeed promised to the victorious Musulman; but he was carefully instructed, that if the goods of this life were his only incitement, *they* likewise would be his only reward.

One of the fifteen provinces of Syria, the cultivated lands to the eastward of the Jordan, had been decorated by Roman vanity with the name of *Arabia* ⁴⁸; and the first arms of the Saracens were justified by the semblance of a national right. The country was enriched by the various benefits of trade; by the vigilance of the emperors it was covered with a line of forts; and the populous cities of Gerafe, Philadelphia, and Bosra ⁴⁹, were secure, at least from a surprise, by the solid structure of their walls. The last of these cities was the eighteenth station from Medina: the road was familiar to the caravans of Hejaz and Irak, who annually visited this plenteous market of the province and the desert: the perpetual jealousy of the Arabs had trained the inhabitants to arms; and twelve thousand horse could sally from the gates of Bosra, an appellation which signifies, in the Syriac language, a strong tower of defence.

Siege of
Bosra.

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Encouraged by their first success against the open towns and flying parties of the borders, a detachment of four thousand Moslems presumed to summon and attack the fortress of Bosra. They were oppressed by the numbers of the Syrians; they were saved by the presence of Caled, with fifteen hundred horse: he blamed the enterprise, restored the battle, and rescued his friend, the venerable Serjabil, who had vainly invoked the unity of God and the promises of the apostle. After a short repose, the Moslems performed their ablutions with sand instead of water⁵⁰; and the morning prayer was recited by Caled before they mounted on horseback. Confident in their strength, the people of Bosra threw open their gates, drew their forces into the plain, and swore to die in the defence of their religion. But a religion of peace was incapable of withstanding the fanatic cry of "Fight, fight! Paradise, Paradise!" that re-echoed in the ranks of the Saracens; and the uproar of the town, the ringing of bells⁵¹, and the exclamations of the priests and monks increased the dismay and disorder of the Christians. With the loss of two hundred and thirty men, the Arabs remained masters of the field; and the ramparts of Bosra, in expectation of human or divine aid, were crowded with holy crosses and consecrated banners. The governor Romanus had recommended an early submission: despised by the people, and degraded from his office, he still retained the desire and opportunity of revenge. In a nocturnal interview, he informed the enemy of

a subterraneous passage from his house under the wall of the city; the son of the caliph, with an hundred volunteers, were committed to the faith of this new ally, and their successful intrepidity gave an easy entrance to their companions. After Caled had imposed the terms of servitude and tribute, the apostate or convert avowed in the assembly of the people his meritorious treason. "I renounce your society," said Romanus, "both in this world, and the world to come. And I deny him that was crucified, and whosoever worships him. And I chuse God for my Lord, Islam for my faith, Mecca for my temple, the Moslems for my brethren, and Mahomet for my prophet; who was sent to lead us into the right way, and to exalt the true religion in spite of those who join partners with God."

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The conquest of Bosra, four days journey from Damascus⁵², encouraged the Arabs to besiege the ancient capital of Syria⁵³. At some distance from the walls, they encamped among the groves and fountains of that delicious territory⁵⁴, and the usual option of the Mahometan faith, of tribute or of war, was proposed to the resolute citizens, who had been lately strengthened by a reinforcement of five thousand Greeks. In the decline as in the infancy of the military art, an hostile defiance was frequently offered and accepted by the generals themselves⁵⁵; many a lance was shivered in the plain of Damascus, and the personal prowess of Caled was signalized in

Siege of Damascus,
A. D. 633.

C H A P. the first sally of the besieged. After an obstinate
 LI. combat, he had overthrown and made prisoner one of the Christian leaders, a stout and worthy antagonist. He instantly mounted a fresh horse, the gift of the governor of Palmyra, and pushed forwards to the front of the battle. "Repose yourself, for a moment," said his friend Derar, "and permit me to supply your place: you are fatigued with fighting with this dog." "O Derar!" replied the indefatigable Saracen, "we shall rest in the world to come. He that labours to-day, shall rest to-morrow." With the same unabated ardour, Caled answered, encountered and vanquished a second champion; and the heads of his two captives who refused to abandon their religion were indignantly hurled into the midst of the city. The event of some general and partial actions reduced the Damascenes to a closer defence: but a messenger whom they dropt from the walls, returned with the promise of speedy and powerful succour, and their tumultuous joy conveyed the intelligence to the camp of the Arabs. After some debate it was resolved by the generals to raise or rather to suspend the siege of Damascus, till they had given battle to the forces of the emperor. In the retreat, Caled would have chosen the more perilous station of the rear-guard; he modestly yielded to the wishes of Abu Obeidah. But in the hour of danger he flew to the rescue of his companion, who was rudely pressed by a sally of six thousand horse and ten thousand foot,

and few among the Christians could relate at Damascus the circumstances of their defeat. The importance of the contest required the junction of the Saracens who were dispersed on the frontiers of Syria and Palestine; and I shall transcribe one of the circular mandates which was addressed to Amrou the future conqueror of Egypt. "In the name of the most merciful God: " from Caled to Amrou, health and happiness. " Know that thy brethren the Moslems design to " march to Aiznadin, where there is an army of " seventy thousand Greeks, who purpose to " come against us, *that they may extinguish the " light of God with their mouths; but God preserveth " his light in spite of the infidels* ". As soon therefore as this letter of mine shall be delivered to thy hands come with those that are with thee to Aiznadin, where thou shalt find us if it please the most high God." The summons were cheerfully obeyed, and the forty-five thousand Moslems who met on the same day, on the same spot, ascribed to the blessing of providence the effects of their activity and zeal.

About four years after the triumphs of the Persian war, the repose of Heraclius and the empire was again disturbed by a new enemy, the power of whose religion was more strongly felt than it was clearly understood by the Christians of the East. In this palace of Constantinople or Antioch, he was awakened by the invasion of Syria, the loss of Bosra, and the danger of Damascus. An army of seventy thousand veterans

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LI.

Battle of
Aiznadin,
A. D. 633.
July 13.

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or new levies, was assembled at Hems or Emefa, under the command of his general Werdan⁵⁷; and these troops, consisting chiefly of cavalry, might be indifferently styled either Syrians, or Greeks, or Romans: *Syrians* from the place of their birth or warfare; *Greeks* from the religion and language of their sovereign; and *Romans*, from the proud appellation which was still profaned by the successors of Constantine. On the plain of Aiznadin, as Werdan rode on a white mule decorated with gold chains, and surrounded with ensigns and standards, he was surprised by the near approach of a fierce and naked warrior, who had undertaken to view the state of the enemy. The adventurous valour of Derar was inspired, and has perhaps been adorned, by the enthusiasm of his age and country. The hatred of the Christians, the love of spoil, and the contempt of danger, were the ruling passions of the audacious Saracen; and the prospect of instant death could never shake his religious confidence, or ruffle the calmness of his resolution, or even suspend the frank and martial pleasantry of his humour. In the most hopeless enterprises, he was bold, and prudent, and fortunate: after innumerable hazards, after being thrice a prisoner in the hands of the infidels, he still survived to relate the achievements, and to enjoy the rewards, of the Syrian conquest. On this occasion, his single lance maintained a flying fight against thirty Romans, who were detached by Werdan; and after killing or unhorsing

seventeen of their number, Derar returned in safety to his applauding brethren. When his rashness was mildly censured by the general, he excused himself with the simplicity of a soldier. "Nay," said Derar, "I did not begin first: but they came out to take me, and I was afraid that God should see me turn my back; and indeed I fought in good earnest, and without doubt God assisted me against them; and had I not been apprehensive of disobeying your orders, I should not have come away as I did; and I perceive already that they will fall into our hands." In the presence of both armies, a venerable Greek advanced from the ranks with a liberal offer of peace; and the departure of the Saracens would have been purchased by a gift to each foldier, of a turban, a robe, and a piece of gold; ten robes, and an hundred pieces to their leader; one hundred robes, and a thousand pieces to the caliph. A smile of indignation expressed the refusal of Caled. "Ye Christian dogs, you know your option; the koran, the tribute, or the sword. We are a people whose delight is in war, rather than in peace; and we despise your pitiful alms, since we shall be speedily masters of your wealth, your families, and your persons." Notwithstanding this apparent disdain, he was deeply conscious of the public danger: those who had been in Persia, and had seen the armies of Chosroes, confessed that they never beheld a more formidable array. From the supe-

CHAP.
II.

riority of the enemy, the artful Saracen derived a fresh incentive of courage: "You see before you," said he, "the united force of the Romans, you cannot hope to escape, but you may conquer Syria in a single day. The event depends on your discipline and patience. Reserve yourselves till the evening. It was in the evening that the prophet was accustomed to vanquish." During two successive engagements, his temperate firmness sustained the darts of the enemy, and the murmurs of his troops. At length, when the spirits and quivers of the adverse line were almost exhausted, Calad gave the signal of onset and victory. The remains of the Imperial army fled to Antioch, or Cæsarea, or Damascus; and the death of four hundred and seventy Moslems was compensated by the opinion that they had sent to hell above fifty thousand of the infidels. The spoil was inestimable; many banners and crosses of gold and silver, precious stones, silver and gold chains, and innumerable suits of the richest armour and apparel. The general distribution was postponed till Damascus should be taken; but the seasonable supply of arms became the instrument of new victories. The glorious intelligence was transmitted to the throne of the caliph, and the Arabian tribes, the coldest or most hostile to the prophet's mission, were eager and importunate to share the harvest of Syria.

The Arabs
return to
Damascus.

The sad tidings were carried to Damascus by the speed of grief and terror; and the inhabitants

beheld from their walls the return of the heroes of Aiznadin. Amrou led the van at the head of nine thousand horse: the bands of the Saracens succeeded each other in formidable review; and the rear was closed by Caled in person, with the standard of the black eagle. To the activity of Derar he entrusted the commission of patrolling round the city with two thousand horse, of scouring the plain, and of intercepting all succour or intelligence. The rest of the Arabian chiefs were fixed in their respective stations before the seven gates of Damascus; and the siege was renewed with fresh vigour and confidence. The art, the labour, the military engines, of the Greeks and Romans are seldom to be found in the simple, though successful, operations of the Saracens: it was sufficient for them to invest a city with arms, rather than with trenches; to repel the sallies of the besieged; to attempt a stratagem or an assault; or to expect the progress of famine and discontent. Damascus would have acquiesced in the trial of Aiznadin, as a final and peremptory sentence between the emperor and the caliph: her courage was rekindled by the example and authority of Thomas, a noble Greek, illustrious in a private condition by the alliance of Heraclius³. The tumult and illumination of the night proclaimed the design of the morning sally; and the Christian hero, who affected to despise the enthusiasm of the Arabs, employed the resource of a similar superstition. At the principal gate, in the sight of both

CHAP. armies, a lofty crucifix was erected; the bishop,
 LI. with his clergy, accompanied the march, and laid the volume of the New Testament before the image of Jesus; and the contending parties were scandalised or edified by a prayer, that the Son of God would defend his servants and vindicate his truth. The battle raged with incessant fury; and the dexterity of Thomas'', an incomparable archer, was fatal to the boldest Saracens, till their death was revenged by a female heroine. The wife of Aban, who had followed him to the holy war, embraced her expiring husband. "Happy" said she, "happy art thou, my dear; thou art gone to thy Lord who first joined us together, and then parted us asunder. I will revenge thy death, and endeavour to the utmost of my power to come to the place where thou art, because I love thee. Henceforth shall no man ever touch me more, for I have dedicated myself to the service of God." Without a groan, without a tear, she washed the corpse of her husband, and buried him with the usual rites. Then grasping the manly weapons, which in her native land she was accustomed to wield, the intrepid widow of Aban fought the place where his murderer fought in the thickest of the battle. Her first arrow pierced the hand of his standard-bearer; her second wounded Thomas in the eye; and the fainting Christians no longer beheld their ensign or their leader. Yet the generous champion of Damascus refused to withdraw to his

palace: his wound was dressed on the rampart; the fight was continued till the evening, and the Syrians rested on their arms. In the silence of the night, the signal was given by a stroke on the great bell; the gates were thrown open, and each gate discharged an impetuous column on the sleeping camp of the Saracens. Caled was the first in arms; at the head of four hundred horse he flew to the post of danger, and the tears trickled down his iron cheeks, as he uttered a fervent ejaculation; "O God, who never
" sleepest, look upon they servants, and do not
" deliver them into the hands of their enemies." The valour and victory of Thomas were arrested by the presence of the *sword of God*; with the knowledge of the peril, the Moslems recovered their ranks, and charged the assailants in the flank and rear. After the loss of thousands, the Christian general retreated with a sigh of despair, and the pursuit of the Saracens was checked by the military engines of the rampart.

After a siege of seventy days⁶⁰, the patience, and perhaps the provisions, of the Damascenes were exhausted; and the bravest of their chiefs submitted to the hard dictates of necessity. In the occurrences of peace and war, they had been taught to dread the fierceness of Caled, and to revere the mild virtues of Abu Obeidah. At the hour of midnight, one hundred chosen deputies of the clergy and people were introduced to the tent of that venerable commander. He received and dismissed them with courtesy. They returned

The city is
taken by
storm and
capitulation,
A. D. 634.

CHAP. with a written agreement, on the faith of a
 LI. companion of Mahomet, that all hostilities should
 cease; that the voluntary emigrants might depart
 in safety, with as much as they could carry away
 of their effects; and that the tributary subjects of
 the caliph should enjoy their lands and houses,
 with the use and possession of seven churches. On
 these terms, the most respectable hostages, and the
 gate nearest to his camp, were delivered into his
 hands: his soldiers imitated the moderation of their
 chief; and he enjoyed the submissive gratitude of
 a people whom he had rescued from destruction.
 But the success of the treaty had relaxed their
 vigilance and in the same moment the opposite
 quarter of the city was betrayed and taken by
 assault. A party of an hundred Arabs had opened
 the eastern gate to a more inexorable foe. "No
 quarter," cried the rapacious and sanguinary
 Caled, "no quarter to the enemies of the Lord:"
 his trumpets sounded, and a torrent of Christian
 blood was poured down the streets of Damascus.
 When he reached the church of St. Mary, he
 was astonished and provoked by the peaceful
 aspect of his companions: their swords were in
 the scabbard, and they were surrounded by a
 multitude of priests and monks. Abu Obeidah
 saluted the general: "God," said he, "has de-
 livered the city into my hands by way of sur-
 render, and has saved the believers the trouble
 of fighting." "And am I not," replied the
 indignant Caled, "am I not the lieutenant of
 the commander of the faithful? Have I not

“ taken the city by storm? The unbelievers shall
 “ perish by the sword, Fall on.” The hungry
 and cruel Arabs would have obeyed the welcome
 command: and Damascus was lost, if the bene-
 volence of Abu Obeidah had not been support-
 ed by a decent and dignified firmness. Throw-
 ing himself between the trembling citizens and
 the most eager of the Barbarians, he adjured
 them by the holy name of God, to respect his
 promise, to suspend their fury, and to wait the
 determination of their chiefs. The chiefs retired
 into the church of St. Mary; and after a vehe-
 ment debate, Caled submitted in some measure
 to the reason and authority of his colleague;
 who urged the sanctity of a covenant, the ad-
 vantage as well as the honour which the Moslems
 would derive from the punctual performance of
 their word, and the obstinate resistance which
 they must encounter from the distrust and des-
 pair of the rest of the Syrian cities. It was
 agreed that the sword should be sheathed, that
 the part of Damascus which had surrendered to
 Abu Obeidah, should be immediately entitled to
 the benefit of his capitulation, and that the final
 decision should be referred to the justice and wis-
 dom of the caliph“. A large majority of the
 people accepted the terms of toleration and tri-
 bute; and Damascus is still peopled by twenty
 thousand Christians. But the valiant Thomas,
 and the free-born patriots who had fought under
 his banner, embraced the alternative of poverty
 and exile. In the adjacent meadow, a numerous

CHAP. LI. encampment was formed of priests and laymen, of foldiers and citizens, of women and children: they collected, with hafte and terror, their moft precious moveables; and abandoned, with loud lamentations or filent anguifh, their native homes, and the pleafant banks of the Pharphar. The inflexible foul of Caled was not touched by the fpectacle of their diftreffs: he difputed with the Damafcenefes the property of a magazine of corn; endeavoured to exclude the garrifon from the benefit of the treaty; confented, with reluctance, that each of the fugitives fhould arm himfelf with a fword, or a lance, or a bow; and fternly declared, that, after a refpite of three days, they might be purfued and treated as the enemies of the Moflems.

Purfuit of the
Damafcenefes.

The paffion of a Syrian youth completed the ruin of the exiles of Damafcus. A nobleman of the city, of the name of Ionas ⁶², was betrothed to a wealthy maiden; but her parents delayed the confummation of his nuptials, and their daughter was perfuaded to efcape with the man whom fhe had chofen. They corrupted the nightly watchmen of the gate Keifan: the lover, who led the way, was encompassed by a fquadron of Arabs; but his exclamation in the Greek tongue, “the bird is taken,” admonifhed his miftrefs to haften her return. In the prefence of Caled, and of death, the unfortunate Jonas profefled his belief in one God, and his apoftle Mahomet; and continued, till the feafon of his martyrdom, to difcharge the duties of a brave

and sincere Musulman. When the city was taken, he flew to the monastery, where Eudocia had taken refuge; but the lover was forgotten; the apostate was scorned; she preferred her religion to her country; and the justice of Caled, though deaf to mercy, refused to detain by force a male or female inhabitant of Damascus. Four days was the general confined to the city by the obligation of the treaty, and the urgent cares of his new conquest. His appetite for blood and rapine would have been extinguished by the hopeless computation of time and distance; but he listened to the importunities of Jonas, who assured him that the weary fugitives might yet be overtaken. At the head of four thousand horse, in the disguise of Christian Arabs, Caled undertook the pursuit. They halted only for the moments of prayer; and their guide had a perfect knowledge of the country. For a long way the footsteps of the Damascenes were plain and conspicuous: they vanished on a sudden; but the Saracens were comforted by the assurance that the caravan had turned aside into the mountains, and must speedily fall into their hands. In traversing the ridges of the Libanus, they endured intolerable hardships, and the sinking spirits of the veteran fanatics were supported and cheered by the unconquerable ardour of a lover. From a peasant of the country, they were informed that the emperor had sent orders to the colony of exiles, to pursue without delay the road of the sea-coast, and of Constantinople; apprehensive,

C H A P. perhaps, that the foldiers and people of Antioch
LI. might be discouraged by the fight and the story of their sufferings. The Saracens were conducted through the territories of Gabala⁶³ and Laodicea, at a cautious distance from the walls of the cities; the rain was incessant, the night was dark, a single mountain separated them from the Roman army; and Caled, ever anxious for the safety of his brethren, whispered an ominous dream in the ear of his companion. With the dawn of day, the prospect again cleared, and they saw before them, in a pleasant valley, the tents of Damascus. After a short interval of repose and prayer, Caled divided his cavalry into four squadrons, committing the first to his faithful Derar, and reserving the last for himself. They successively rushed on, the promiscuous multitude, insufficiently provided with arms, and already vanquished by sorrow and fatigue. Except a captive who was pardoned and dismissed, the Arabs enjoyed the satisfaction of believing that not a Christian of either sex escaped the edge of their scymetars. The gold and silver of Damascus was scattered over the camp, and a royal wardrobe of three hundred load of silk might clothe an army of naked Barbarians. In the tumult of the battle, Jonas fought and found the object of his pursuit; but her resentment was inflamed by the last act of his perfidy; and as Eudocia struggled in his hateful embraces, she struck a dagger to her heart. Another female, the widow of Thomas, and the real or supposed daughter of Heraclius, was spared and released

released without a ransom; but the generosity of Caled was the effect of his contempt; and the haughty Saracen insulted, by a message of defiance, the throne of the Cæsars. Caled had penetrated above an hundred and fifty miles into the heart of the Roman province: he returned to Damascus with the same secrecy and speed. On the accession of Omar, the *sword of God* was removed from the command; but the caliph, who blamed the rashness, was compelled to applaud the vigour and conduct, of the enterprize.

Another expedition of the conquerors of Damascus will equally display their avidity and their contempt for the riches of the present world. They were informed that the produce and manufactures of the country were annually collected in the fair of Abyla⁺, about thirty miles from the city; that the cell of a devout hermit was visited at the same time by a multitude of pilgrims; and that the festival of trade and superstition would be ennobled by the nuptials of the daughter of the governor of Tripoli. Abdallah, the son of Jaafar, a glorious and holy martyr, undertook, with a banner of five hundred horse, the pious and profitable commission of despoiling the infidels. As he approached the fair of Abyla, he was astonished by the report of the mighty concourse of Jews and Christians, Greeks and Armenians, of natives of Syria, and of strangers of Egypt, to the number of ten thousand, besides a guard of five thousand horse that attended the person of the bride. The Saracens paused: “For

C H A P.

LI.

Fair of
Abyla.

C H A P. " my own part," said Abdallah, " I dare not go
 LI. " back : our foes are many, our danger is great,
 " but our reward is splendid and secure, either
 " in this life or in the life to come. Let every
 " man, according to his inclination, advance or
 " retire." Not a Musulman deserted his standard.
 " Lead the way," said Abdallah to his Christian
 guide, " and you shall see what the companions
 " of the prophet can perform." They charged
 in five squadrons; but after the first advantage
 of the surprise they were encompassed and almost
 overwhelmed by the multitude of their enemies;
 and their valiant band is fancifully compared to
 a white spot in the skin of a black camel ".
 About the hour of sunset, when their weapons
 dropped from their hands, when they panted on
 the verge of eternity, they discovered an ap-
 proaching cloud of dust, they heard the welcome
 sound of the *tecbir* ", and they soon perceived
 the standard of Caled, who flew to their relief
 with the utmost speed of his cavalry. The Chris-
 tians were broken by his attack, and slaughtered
 in their flight as far as the river of Tripoli. They
 left behind them the various riches of the fair;
 the merchandises that were exposed for sale, the
 money that was brought for purchase, the gay
 decorations of the nuptials, and the governor's
 daughter, with forty of her female attendants.
 The fruits, provisions, and furniture, the money,
 plate, and jewels, were diligently laden on the
 backs of horses, asses, and mules; and the holy
 robbers returned in triumph to Damascus. The

hermit, after a short and angry controversy with Caled, declined the crown of martyrdom, and was left alive in the solitary scene of blood and devastation.

C H A P.
LI.

Syria ⁶⁷, one of the countries that have been improved by the most early cultivation, is not unworthy of the preference ⁶⁸. The heat of the climate is tempered by the vicinity of the sea and mountains, by the plenty of wood and water; and the produce of a fertile soil affords the subsistence, and encourages the propagation, of men and animals. From the age of David to that of Heraclius, the country was overspread with ancient and flourishing cities: the inhabitants were numerous and wealthy: and, after the slow ravage of despotism and superstition, after the recent calamities of the Persian war, Syria could still attract and reward the rapacious tribes of the desert. A plain, of ten days journey, from Damascus to Aleppo and Antioch, is watered, on the western side, by the winding course of the Orontes. The hills of Libanus and Anti-Libanus are planted from north to south, between the Orontes and Mediterranean; and the epithet of *hollow* (Cœlesyria) was applied to a long and fruitful valley, which is confined in the same direction by the two ridges of snowy mountains ⁶⁹. Among the cities, which are enumerated by Greek and Oriental names in the geography and conquest of Syria, we may distinguish Emesa or Hems, Heliopolis or Baalbec, the former as the metropolis of the plain, the latter as the capital

Sieges of
Heliopolis
and Emesa,
A. D. 635.

CHAP.
II.

of the valley. Under the last of the Cæsars, they were strong and populous: the turrets glittered from afar: an ample space was covered with public and private buildings; and the citizens were illustrious by their spirit, or at least by their pride; by their riches, or at least by their luxury. In the days of paganism, both Emesa and Heliopolis were addicted to the worship of Baal, or the sun; but the decline of their superstition and splendour has been marked by a singular variety of fortune. Not a vestige remains of the temple of Emesa, which was equalled in poetic style to the summits of mount Libanus⁷⁰, while the ruins of Baalbec, invisible to the writers of antiquity, excite the curiosity and wonder of the European traveller⁷¹. The measure of the temple is two hundred feet in length, and one hundred in breadth: the front is adorned with a double portico of eight columns; fourteen may be counted on either side; and each column, forty-five feet in height, is composed of three massy blocks of stone or marble. The proportions and ornaments of the Corinthian order express the architecture of the Greeks; but as Baalbec has never been the seat of a monarch, we are at a loss to conceive how the expence of these magnificent structures could be supplied by private or municipal liberality⁷². From the conquest of Damascus the Saracens proceeded to Heliopolis and Emesa; but I shall decline the repetition of the sallies and combats which have been already shewn on a larger scale. In the prosecution of

the war, their policy was not less effectual than their sword. By short and separate truces they dissolved the union of the enemy; accustomed the Syrians to compare their friendship with their enmity; familiarised the idea of their language, religion, and manners; and exhausted, by clandestine purchase, the magazines and arsenals of the cities which they returned to besiege. They aggravated the ransom of the more wealthy, or the more obstinate; and Chalcis alone was taxed at five thousand ounces of gold, five thousand ounces of silver, two thousand robes of silk, and as many figs and olives as would load five thousand asses. But the terms of truce or capitulation were faithfully observed; and the lieutenant of the caliph, who had promised not to enter the walls of the captive Baalbec, remained tranquil and immoveable in his tent till the jarring factions solicited the interposition of a foreign master. The conquest of the plain and valley of Syria was atchieved in less than two years. Yet the commander of the faithful reproved the slowness of their progress, and the Saracens, bewailing their fault with tears of rage and repentance, called aloud on their chiefs to lead them forth to fight the battles of the Lord. In a recent action, under the walls of Emesa, an Arabian youth, the cousin of Caled, was heard aloud to exclaim, "Methinks I see the black-eyed girls looking upon me; one of whom, should she appear in this world, all mankind would die for love of her. And I see in the

C H A P.

LI.

C H A P. “ hand of one of them, an handkerchief of green
 LL. “ filk, and a cap of precious stones, and she
 “ beckons me, and calls out, come hither
 “ quickly for I love thee.” With these words,
 charging the Christians, he made havock wher-
 ever he went, till, observed at length by the
 governor of Hems, he was struck through with
 a javelin.

Battle of
 Yermuk
 A. D. 636,
 November.

It was incumbent on the Saracens to exert the full powers of their valour and enthusiasm against the forces of the emperor, who was taught by repeated losses, that the rover of the desert had undertaken, and would speedily atchieve, a regular and permanent conquest. From the provinces of Europe and Asia, fourscore thousand soldiers were transported by sea and land to Antioch and Cæsarea: the light troops of the army consisted of sixty thousand Christian Arabs of the tribe of Gassan. Under the banner of Jabalah, the last of their princes, they marched in the van; and it was a maxim of the Greeks, that, for the purpose of cutting diamond, a diamond was the most effectual. Heraclius withheld his person from the dangers of the field; but his presumption, or perhaps his despondency, suggested a peremptory order, that the fate of the province and the war should be decided by a single battle. The Syrians were attached to the standard of Rome and of the cross; but the noble, the citizen, the peasant, were exasperated by the injustice and cruelty of a licentious host, who oppressed them as subjects, and def-

pised them as strangers and aliens ⁷³. A report of these mighty preparations was conveyed to the Saracens in their camp of Emefa; and the chiefs, though resolved to fight, assembled a council: the faith of Abu Obeidah would have expected on the same spot the glory of martyrdom; the wisdom of Caled advised an honourable retreat to the skirts of Palestine and Arabia, where they might await the succours of their friends and the attack of the unbelievers. A speedy messenger soon returned from the throne of Medina, with the blessings of Omar and Ali, the prayers of the widows of the prophet, and a reinforcement of eight thousand Moslems. In their way they overturned a detachment of Greeks, and when they joined at Yermuk the camp of their brethren, they found the pleasing intelligence, that Caled had already defeated and scattered the Christian Arabs of the tribe of Gassan. In the neighbourhood of Bosra, the springs of mount Hermon descend in a torrent to the plain of Decapolis, or ten cities; and the Hieromax, a name which has been corrupted to Yermuk, is lost after a short course in the lake of Tiberias ⁷⁴. The banks of this obscure stream were illustrated by a long and bloody encounter. On this momentous occasion, the public voice, and the modesty of Abu Obeidah, restored the command to the most deserving of the Moslems. Caled assumed his station in the front, his colleague was posted in the rear, that the disorder of the fugitives might be checked by his venerable

C H A P. aspect and the sight of the yellow banner which
 LI. Mahomet had displayed before the walls of
 Chaibar. The last line was occupied by the
 sister of Derar, with the Arabian women who
 had enlisted in this holy war, who were accus-
 tomed to wield the bow and the lance, and who
 in a moment of captivity had defended, against
 the uncircumcised ravishers, their chastity and
 religion⁷⁵. The exhortation of the generals was
 brief and forcible: "Paradise is before you, the
 "devil and hell-fire in your rear." Yet such
 was the weight of the Roman cavalry, that the
 right wing of the Arabs was broken und separ-
 ated from the main body. Thrice did they retreat
 in disorder, and thrice were they driven back
 to the charge by the reproaches and blows of
 the women. In the intervals of action, Abu
 Obeidah visited the tents of his brethren, pro-
 longed their repose, by repeating at once the
 prayers of two different hours; bound up their
 wounds with his own hands, and administered the
 comfortable reflection, that the infidels partook
 of their sufferings without partaking of their re-
 ward. Four thousand and thirty of the Moslems
 were buried in the field of battle; and the skill
 of the Armenian archers enabled seven hundred
 to boast that they had lost an eye in that meri-
 torious service. The veterans of the Syrian war
 acknowledged that it was the hardest and most
 doubtful of the days which they had seen. But
 it was likewise the most decisive: many thousands
 of the Greeks and Syrians fell by the swords of

the Arabs; many were slaughtered, after the defeat in the woods and mountains; many, by mistaking the ford, were drowned in the waters of the Yermuk; and however the loss may be magnified⁷⁶, the Christian writers confess and bewail the bloody punishment of their sins⁷⁷. Manuel, the Roman general, was either killed at Damascus, or took refuge in the monastery of mount Sinai. An exile in the Byzantine court, Jabalah lamented the manners of Arabia, and his unlucky preference of the Christian cause⁷⁸. He had once inclined to the profession of Islam; but in the pilgrimage of Mecca, Jabalah was provoked to strike one of his brethren, and fled with amazement from the stern and equal justice of the caliph. The victorious Saracens enjoyed at Damascus a month of pleasure and repose: the spoil was divided by the discretion of Abu Obeidah: an equal share was allotted to a soldier and to his horse, and a double portion was reserved for the noble coursers of the Arabian breed.

After the battle of Yermuk, the Roman army no longer appeared in the field; and the Saracens might securely chuse among the fortified towns of Syria, the first object of their attack. They consulted the caliph whether they should march to Cæsarea or Jerusalem; and the advice of Ali determined the immediate siege of the latter. To a profane eye, Jerusalem was the first or second capital of Palestine; but after Mecca and Medina, it was revered and visited by the devout Moslems, as the temple of the Holy Land which had been

Conquest of
Jerusalem,
A. D. 637.

C H A P. sanctified by the revelation of Moses, of Jesus,
 LI. and of Mahomet himself. The son of Abu
 Sophian was sent with five thousand Arabs to
 try the first experiment of surprise or treaty: but
 on the eleventh day, the town was invested by
 the whole force of Abu Obeidah. He addressed
 the customary summons to the chief commanders
 and people of *Ælia*”. “Health and happiness
 “to every one that follows the right way! We
 “require of you to testify that there is but one
 “God, and that Mahomet is his apostle. If
 “you refuse this, consent to pay tribute, and be
 “under us forthwith. Otherwise I shall bring
 “men against you who love death better than
 “you do the drinking of wine or eating hogs
 “flesh. Nor will I ever stir from you, if it
 “please God, till I have destroyed those that
 “fight for you, and made slaves of your child-
 “ren.” But the city was defended on every
 side by deep vallies and steep ascents; since the
 invasion of Syria, the walls and towers had been
 anxiously restored; the bravest of the fugitives
 of Yermuk had stopped in the nearest place of
 refuge; and in the defence of the sepulchre of
 Christ, the natives and strangers might feel some
 sparks of the enthusiasm which so fiercely glow-
 ed in the bosoms of the Saracens. The siege of
 Jerusalem lasted four months; not a day was lost
 without some action of sally or assault; the military
 engines incessantly played from the ramparts;
 and the inclemency of the winter was still more
 painful and destructive to the Arabs. The Chris-

tians yielded at length to the perseverance of the besiegers. The patriarch Sophronius appeared on the walls, and by the voice of an interpreter demanded a conference. After a vain attempt to dissuade the lieutenant of the caliph from his impious enterprize, he proposed, in the name of the people, a fair capitulation, with this extraordinary clause, that the articles of security should be ratified by the authority and presence of Omar himself. The question was debated in the council of Medina; the sanctity of the place, and the advice of Ali, persuaded the caliph to gratify the wishes of his soldiers and enemies, and the simplicity of his journey is more illustrious than the royal pageants of vanity and oppression. The conqueror of Persia and Syria was mounted on a red camel, which carried, besides his person, a bag of corn, a bag of dates, a wooden dish, and a leathern bottle of water. Wherever he halted, the company, without distinction, was invited to partake of his homely fare, and the repast was consecrated by the prayer and exhortation of the commander of the faithful⁸⁰. But in this expedition or pilgrimage, his power was exercised in the administration of justice; he reformed the licentious polygamy of the Arabs, relieved the tributaries from extortion and cruelty, and chastised the luxury of the Saracens, by despoiling them of their rich silks, and dragging them on their faces in the dirt. When he came within sight of Jerusalem, the caliph cried with a loud voice, "God is victorious. O Lord give

CHAP.
LI.

“ us an easy conquest;” and pitching his tent of coarse hair, calmly seated himself on the ground. After signing the capitulation, he entered the city without fear or precaution; and courteously discoursed with the patriarch concerning its religious antiquities⁸¹. Sophronius bowed before his new master, and secretly muttered, in the words of Daniel, “ The abomination of desolation is in the holy place⁸².” At the hour of prayer, they stood together in the church of the Resurrection; but the caliph refused to perform his devotions, and contented himself with praying on the steps of the church of Constantine. To the patriarch he disclosed his prudent and honourable motive. “ Had I yielded,” said Omar, “ to your request, the Moslems of a future age would have infringed the treaty under colour of imitating my example.” By his command, the ground of the temple of Solomon was prepared for the foundation of a mosch⁸³; and, during a residence of ten days, he regulated the present and future state of his Syrian conquests. Medina might be jealous, lest the caliph should be detained by the sanctity of Jerusalem or the beauty of Damascus; her apprehensions were dispelled by his prompt and voluntary return to the tomb of the apostle⁸⁴.

Of Aleppo
and Antioch,
A. D. 638.

To atchieve what yet remained of the Syrian war, the caliph had formed two separate armies; a chosen detachment, under Amrou and Yezid, was left in the camp of Palestine; while the larger division, under the standard of Abu Obeidah and

Caled, marched away to the north against Antioch and Aleppo. The latter of these, the Berœa of the Greeks, was not yet illustrious as the capital of a province or a kingdom; and the inhabitants, by anticipating their submission and pleading their poverty, obtained a moderate composition for their lives and religion. But the castle of Aleppo^s, distinct from the city, stood erect on a lofty artificial mound: the sides were sharpened to a precipice, and faced with free-stone; and the breadth of the ditch might be filled with water from the neighbouring springs. After the loss of three thousand men, the garrison was still equal to the defence; and Youkinna, their valiant and hereditary chief, had murdered his brother, an holy monk, for daring to pronounce the name of peace. In a siege of four or five months, the hardest of the Syrian war, great numbers of the Saracens were killed and wounded: their removal to the distance of a mile could not seduce the vigilance of Youkinna; nor could the Christians be terrified by the execution of three hundred captives, whom they beheaded before the castle wall. The silence, and at length the complaints, of Abu Obeidah informed the caliph that their hope and patience were consumed at the foot of this impregnable fortress. “I am variously affected,” replied Omar, “by the difference of your success; but I charge you by no means to raise the siege of the castle. Your retreat would diminish the reputation of our arms, and encourage the infidels

CHAP. " to fall upon you on all sides. Remain before
 LI. " Aleppo till God shall determine the event, and
 " forage with your horse round the adjacent
 " country." The exhortation of the commander
 of the faithful was fortified by a supply of vo-
 lunteers from all the tribes of Arabia, who ar-
 rived in the camp on horses or camels. Among
 these was Dames, of a servile birth, but of
 gigantic size and intrepid resolution. The forty-
 seventh day of his service he proposed, with
 only thirty men, to make an attempt on the
 castle. The experience and testimony of Caled
 recommended his offer; and Abu Obeidah ad-
 monished his brethren not to despise the baser
 origin of Dames, since he himself, could he re-
 linquish the public care, would cheerfully serve
 under the banner of the slave. His design was
 covered by the appearance of a retreat; and the
 camp of the Saracens was pitched about a league
 from Aleppo. The thirty adventurers lay in
 ambush at the foot of the hill; and Dames at
 length succeeded in his enquiries, though he was
 provoked by the ignorance of his Greek captives.
 " God curse these dogs," said the illiterate Arab,
 " what a strange barbarous language they speak!"
 At the darkest hour of the night, he scaled the
 most accessible height which he had diligently
 surveyed, a place where the stones were less
 entire, or the slope less perpendicular, or the
 guard less vigilant. Seven of the stoutest Saracens
 mounted on each others shoulders, and the
 weight of the column was sustained on the broad

and sinewy back of the gigantic slave. The foremost in this painful ascent could grasp and climb the lowest part of the battlements: they silently stabbed and cast down the sentinels; and the thirty brethren, repeating a pious ejaculation, "O apostle of God, help and deliver us!" were successively drawn up by the long folds of their turbans. With bold and cautious footsteps, Dames explored the palace of the governor, who celebrated, in riotous merriment, the festival of his deliverance. From thence, returning to his companions, he assaulted on the inside the entrance of the castle. They overpowered the guard, unbolted the gate, let down the drawbridge, and defended the narrow pass, till the arrival of Caled, with the dawn of day, relieved their danger and assured their conquest. Youkinna, a formidable foe, became an active and useful profelyte; and the general of the Saracens expressed his regard for the most humble merit, by detaining the army at Aleppo till Dames was cured of his honourable wounds. The capital of Syria was still covered by the castle of Aazaz and the iron bridge of the Orontes. After the loss of those important posts, and the defeat of the last of the Roman armies, the luxury of Antioch⁸⁶ trembled and obeyed. Her safety was ransomed with three hundred thousand pieces of gold; but the throne of the successors of Alexander, the seat of the Roman government in the East, which had been decorated by Cæsar with the titles of free, and holy, and inviolate, was degraded under the

C H A P.

II.

Flight of
Heraclius,
A. D. 638,

yoke of the caliphs to the secondary rank of a provincial town⁸⁷.

In the life of Heraclius, the glories of the Persian war are clouded on either hand by the disgrace and weakness of his more early and his later days. When the successors of Mahomet unsheathed the sword of war and religion, he was astonished at the boundless prospect of toil and danger; his nature was indolent, nor could the infirm and frigid age of the emperor be kindled to a second effort. The sense of shame, and the importunities of the Syrians, prevented his hasty departure from the scene of action; but the hero was no more; and the loss of Damascus and Jerusalem, the bloody fields of Aiznadin and Yermuk, may be imputed in some degree to the absence or misconduct of the sovereign. Instead of defending the sepulchre of Christ, he involved the church and state in a metaphysical controversy for the unity of his will; and while Heraclius crowned the offspring of his second nuptials, he was tamely stripped of the most valuable part of their inheritance. In the cathedral of Antioch, in the presence of the bishops, at the foot of the crucifix, he bewailed the sins of the prince and people; but his confession instructed the world, that it was vain, and perhaps impious, to resist the judgment of God. The Saracens were invincible in fact, since they were invincible in opinion; and the desertion of Youkinna, his false repentance and repeated perfidy; might justify the suspicion of the emperor, that he was encom-

passed

passed by traitors and apostates, who conspired to betray his person and their country to the enemies of Christ. In the hour of adversity, his superstition was agitated by the omens and dreams of a falling crown; and after bidding an eternal farewell to Syria, he secretly embarked with a few attendants, and absolved the faith of his subjects⁸⁸. Constantine, his eldest son, had been stationed with forty thousand men at Cæsarea, the civil metropolis of the three provinces of Palestine. But his private interest recalled him to the Byzantine court; and, after the flight of his father, he felt himself an unequal champion to the united force of the caliph. His vanguard was boldly attacked by three hundred Arabs and a thousand black slaves, who, in the depth of winter, had climbed the snowy mountains of Libanus, and who were speedily followed by the victorious squadrons of Caled himself. From the north and south the troops of Antioch and Jerusalem advanced along the sea shore, till their banners were joined under the walls of the Phœnician cities: Tripoli and Tyre were betrayed; and a fleet of fifty transports, which entered without distrust the captive harbours, brought a seasonable supply of arms and provisions to the camp of the Saracens. Their labours were terminated by the unexpected surrender of Cæsarea: the Roman prince had embarked in the night⁸⁹; and the defenceless citizens solicited their pardon with an offering of two hundred thousand pieces of gold. The remainder of the province

C H A P.

LI.

End of the
Syrian war.

CHAP. Ramlah, Ptolemais or Acre, Sichem or Neapolis,
 LL. Gaza, Ascalon, Berytus, Sidon, Gabala, Laodicea, Apamea, Hierapolis, no longer presumed to dispute the will of the conqueror; and Syria bowed under the sceptre of the caliphs seven hundred years after Pompey had despoiled the last of the Macedonian kings."

The conquerors of
 Syria,
 A. D.
 633—639.

The sieges and battles of six campaigns had consumed many thousands of the Moslems. They died with the reputation and the cheerfulness of martyrs; and the simplicity of their faith may be expressed in the words of an Arabian youth, when he embraced, for the last time, his sister and mother: "It is not," said he, "the
 "delicacies of Syria, or the fading delights
 "of this world, that have prompted me to
 "devote my life in the cause of religion.
 "But I seek the favour of God and his apostle;
 "and I have heard, from one of the com-
 "panions of the prophet, that the spirits of
 "the martyrs will be lodged in the crops of
 "green birds, who shall taste the fruits, and
 "drink of the rivers, of paradise. Farewel, we
 "shall meet again among the groves and
 "fountains which God has provided for his
 "elect." The faithful captives might exercise a passive and more arduous resolution; and a cousin of Mahomet is celebrated for refusing, after an abstinence of three days, the wine and pork, the only nourishment that was allowed by the malice of the infidels. The frailty of some weaker brethren exasperated the implacable spirit

of fanaticism; and the father of Amer deplored, in pathetic strains, the apostacy and damnation of a son, who had renounced the promises of God, and the intercession of the prophet, to occupy, with the priests and deacons, the lowest mansions of hell. The more fortunate Arabs, who survived the war and persevered in the faith, were restrained by their abstemious leader from the abuse of prosperity. After a refreshment of three days, Abu Obeidah withdrew his troops from the pernicious contagion of the luxury of Antioch, and assured the caliph that their religion and virtue could only be preserved by the hard discipline of poverty and labour. But the virtue of Omar, however rigorous to himself, was kind and liberal to his brethren. After a just tribute of praise and thanksgiving, he dropt a tear of compassion; and sitting down on the ground, wrote an answer, in which he mildly censured the severity of his lieutenant: "God," said the successor of the prophet, "has not forbidden the
 " use of the good things of this world to faithful
 " men, and such as have performed good works.
 " Therefore you ought to have given them
 " leave to rest themselves, and partake freely of
 " those good things which the country affordeth.
 " If any of the Saracens has no family in Arabia,
 " they may marry in Syria; and whosoever of
 " them wants any female slaves, he may pur-
 " chase as many as he hath occasion for." The conquerors prepared to use, or to abuse, this gracious permission; but the year of their triumph

CHAP. was marked by a mortality of men and cattle;
 LI. and twenty-five thousand Saracens were snatched away from the possession of Syria. The death of Abu Obeidah might be lamented by the Christians; but his brethren recollected that he was one of the ten elect whom the prophet had named as the heirs of paradise⁹¹. Calid survived his brethren about three years; and the tomb of the sword of God is shewn in the neighbourhood of Emesa. His valour, which founded in Arabia and Syria the empire of the caliphs, was fortified by the opinion of a special providence; and as long as he wore a cap, which had been blessed by Mahomet, he deemed himself invulnerable amidst the darts of the infidels.

Progress of
 the Syrian
 conquerors,
 A. D.
 639—655.

The place of the first conquerors was supplied by a new generation of their children and countrymen; Syria became the seat and support of the house of Ommyyah; and the revenue, the soldiers, the ships of that powerful kingdom, were consecrated to enlarge on every side the empire of the caliphs. But the Saracens despise a superfluity of fame; and their historians scarcely condescend to mention the subordinate conquests which are lost in the splendour and rapidity of their victorious career. To the *north* of Syria, they passed mount Taurus, and reduced to their obedience the province of Cilicia, with its capital Tarsus, the ancient monument of the Assyrian kings. Beyond a second ridge of the same mountains, they spread the flame of war, rather than the light of religion, as far as the

shores of the Euxine and the neighbourhood of Constantinople. To the *east* they advanced to the banks and sources of the Euphrates and Tigris⁹²: the long-disputed barrier of Rome and Persia was for ever confounded; the walls of Edessa and Amida, of Dara and Nisibis, which had resisted the arms and engines of Sapor or Nushirvan, were levelled in the dust; and the holy city of Abgarus might vainly produce the epistle or the image of Christ to an unbelieving conqueror. To the *west*, the Syrian kingdom is bounded by the sea: and the ruin of Aradus, a small island or peninsula on the coast, was postponed during ten years. But the hills of Libanus abounded in timber, the trade of Phœnicia was populous in mariners; and a fleet of seventeen hundred barks was equipped and manned by the natives of the desert. The Imperial navy of the Romans fled before them from the Pamphylian rocks to the Hellespont; but the spirit of the emperor, a grandson of Heraclius, had been subdued before the combat by a dream and a pun⁹³. The Saracens rode masters of the sea; and the islands of Cyprus, Rhodes, and the Cyclades, were successively exposed to their rapacious visits. Three hundred years before the Christian æra, the memorable though fruitless siege of Rhodes⁹⁴ by Demetrius, had furnished that maritime republic with the materials and the subject of a trophy. A gigantic statue of Apollo or the sun, seventy cubits in height, was erected at the entrance of the harbour, a monument of

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the freedom and the arts of Greece. After standing fifty-six years, the colossus of Rhodes was overthrown by an earthquake: but the massy trunk, and huge fragments, lay scattered eight centuries on the ground, and are often described as one of the wonders of the ancient world. They were collected by the diligence of the Saracens, and sold to a Jewish merchant of Edessa, who is said to have laden nine hundred camels with the weight of the brass metal: an enormous weight, though we should include the hundred colossal figures⁹⁵, and the three thousand statues, which adorned the prosperity of the city of the sun.

EGYPT,
Character
and life of
Amrou.

II. The conquest of Egypt may be explained by the character of the victorious Saracen, one of the first of his nation, in an age when the meanest of the brethren was exalted above his nature by the spirit of enthusiasm. The birth of Amrou was at once base and illustrious: his mother, a notorious prostitute, was unable to decide among five of the Koreish; but the proof of resemblance adjudged the child to Aasi the oldest of her lovers⁹⁶. The youth of Amrou was impelled by the passions and prejudices of his kindred: his poetic genius was exercised in satirical verses against the person and doctrine of Mahomet; his dexterity was employed by the reigning faction to pursue the religious exiles who had taken refuge in the court of the Æthiopian king⁹⁷. Yet he returned from this embassy, a secret profelyte; his reason or his interest

determined him to renounce the worship of idols; he escaped from Mecca with his friend Caled, and the prophet of Medina enjoyed at the same moment the satisfaction of embracing the two firmest champions of his cause. The impatience of Amrou to lead the armies of the faithful, was checked by the reproof of Omar, who advised him not to seek power and dominion, since he who is a subject to-day, may be a prince to-morrow. Yet his merit was not overlooked by the two first successors of Mahomet; they were indebted to his arms for the conquest of Palestine; and in all the battles and sieges of Syria, he united with the temper of a chief, the valour of an adventurous soldier. In a visit to Medina, the caliph expressed a wish to survey the sword which had cut down so many Christian warriors: the son of Aasi unsheathed a short and ordinary scymetar; and as he perceived the surprise of Omar, "Alas," said the modest Saracen, "the sword itself, without the arm of its master, is neither sharper nor more weighty than the sword of Pharezdak the poet." After the conquest of Egypt, he was recalled by the jealousy of the caliph Othman; but in the subsequent troubles, the ambition of a soldier, a statesman, and an orator, emerged from a private station. His powerful support, both in council and in the field, established the throne of the Ommiades; the administration and revenue of Egypt were restored by the gratitude of

CHAP. LI. Moawiyah to a faithful friend who had raised himself above the rank of a subject; and Amrou ended his days in the palace and city which he had founded on the banks of the Nile. His dying speech to his children is celebrated by the Arabians as a model of eloquence and wisdom: he deplored the errors of his youth; but if the penitent was still infected by the vanity of a poet, he might exaggerate the venom and mischief of his impious compositions⁹⁹.

Invasion of
Egypt,
A. D. 638,
June.

From his camp, in Palestine, Amrou had surprised or anticipated the caliph's leave for the invasion of Egypt¹⁰⁰. The magnanimous Omar trusted in his God and his sword; which had shaken the thrones of Chosroes and Cæsar; but when he compared the slender force of the Moslems with the greatness of the enterprise, he condemned his own rashness, and listened to his timid companions. The pride and the greatness of Pharaoh were familiar to the readers of the Koran; and a tenfold repetition of prodigies had been scarcely sufficient to effect, not the victory, but the flight, of six hundred thousand of the children of Israel: the cities of Egypt were many and populous; their architecture was strong and solid; the Nile, with its numerous branches, was alone an insuperable barrier; and the granary of the Imperial city would be obstinately defended by the Roman powers. In this perplexity, the commander of the faithful resigned himself to the decision of chance, or, in his opinion, of providence. At the head of

only four thousand Arabs, the intrepid Amrou C H A P.
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had marched away from his station of Gaza when he was overtaken by the messenger of Omar.

“ If you are still in Syria, ” said the ambiguous mandate, “ retreat without delay; but if, at the receipt of this epistle, you have already reached the frontiers of Egypt, advance with confidence, and depend on the succour of God and of your brethren. ” The experience, perhaps the secret intelligence, of Amrou had taught him to suspect the mutability of courts; and he continued his march till his tents were unquestionably pitched on Egyptian ground. He there assembled his officers, broke the seal, perused the epistle, gravely enquired the name and situation of the place, and declared his ready obedience to the commands of the caliph. After a siege of thirty days, he took possession of Farmah or Pelusium; and that key of Egypt, as it has been justly named, unlocked the entrance of the country, as far as the ruins of Heliopolis and the neighbourhood of the modern Cairo.

On the western side of the Nile, at a small distance to the east of the pyramids, at a small distance to the south of the Delta, Memphis, The cities of
Memphis,
Babylon,
and Cairo. one hundred and fifty furlongs in circumference, displayed the magnificence of ancient kings. Under the reign of the Ptolemies and Cæsars, the seat of government was removed to the seacoast; the ancient capital was eclipsed by the arts and opulence of Alexandria; the palaces, and at length the temples, were reduced to a

CHAP. desolate and ruinous condition: yet, in the age
 LI. of Augustus, and even in that of Constantine, Memphis was still numbered among the greatest and most populous of the provincial cities ¹⁰¹. The banks of the Nile, in this place of the breadth of three thousand feet, were united by two bridges of sixty and of thirty boats, connected in the middle stream by the small island of Rouda, which was covered with gardens and habitations ¹⁰². The eastern extremity of the bridge was terminated by the town of Babylon and the camp of a Roman legion, which protected the passage of the river and the second capital of Egypt. This important fortress, which might fairly be described as a part of Memphis or *Misrah*, was invested by the arms of the lieutenant of Omar: a reinforcement of four thousand Saracens soon arrived in his camp; and the military engines, which battered the walls, may be imputed to the art and labour of his Syrian allies. Yet the siege was protracted to seven months; and the rash invaders were encompassed and threatened by the inundation of the Nile ¹⁰³. Their last assault was bold and successful: they passed the ditch, which had been fortified with iron spikes, applied their scaling-ladders, entered the fortress with the shout of "God is victorious!" and drove the remnant of the Greeks to their boats and the isle of Rouda. The spot was afterwards recommended to the conqueror by the easy communication with the gulf and the peninsula of

Arabia: the remains of Memphis were deserted: the tents of the Arabs were converted into permanent habitations; and the first mosch was blessed by the presence of fourscore companions of Mahomet ¹⁰⁴. A new city arose in their camp on the eastward bank of the Nile; and the contiguous quarters of Babylon and Fostat are confounded in their present decay by the appellation of old Misrah or Cairo, of which they form an extensive suburb. But the name of Cairo, the town of victory, more strictly belongs to the modern capital, which was founded in the tenth century by the Fatimite caliphs ¹⁰⁵. It has gradually receded from the river, but the continuity of buildings may be traced by an attentive eye from the monuments of Sesostris to those of Saladin ¹⁰⁶.

Yet the Arabs, after a glorious and profitable enterprize, must have retreated to the desert, had they not found a powerful alliance in the heart of the country. The rapid conquest of Alexander was assisted by the superstition and revolt of the natives: they abhorred their Persian oppressors, the disciples of the Magi, who had burnt the temples of Egypt, and feasted with sacrilegious appetite on the flesh of the god Apis ¹⁰⁷. After a period of ten centuries the same revolution was renewed by a similar cause; and in the support of an incomprehensible creed, the zeal of the Coptic Christians was equally ardent. I have already explained the origin and progress of the Monophysite controversy, and the perse-

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Voluntary
submission of
the Copts or
Jacobites,
A. D. 638.

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cution of the emperors, which converted a sect into a nation, and alienated Egypt from their religion and government. The Saracens were received as the deliverers of the Jacobite church; and a secret and effectual treaty was opened during the siege of Memphis between a victorious army and a people of slaves. A rich and noble Egyptian, of the name of Mokawkas, had dissembled his faith to obtain the administration of his province: in the disorders of the Persian war he aspired to independence: the embassy of Mahomet ranked him among princes; but he declined, with rich gifts and ambiguous compliments, the proposal of a new religion¹⁰⁸. The abuse of his trust exposed him to the resentment of Heraclius; his submission was delayed by arrogance and fear; and his conscience was prompted by interest to throw himself on the favour of the nation and the support of the Saracens. In his first conference with Amrou, he heard without indignation the usual option of the Koran, the tribute or the sword. “The
“Greeks,” replied Mokawkas, “are determined
“to abide the determination of the sword; but
“with the Greeks I desire no communion, either
“in this world or in the next, and I abjure
“for ever the Byzantine tyrant, his synod of
“Chalcedon, and his Melchite slaves. For myself
“and my brethren, we are resolved to live and
“die in the profession of the gospel and unity
“of Christ. It is impossible for us to embrace
“the revelations of your prophet; but we are

“ desirous of peace, and cheerfully submit to
 “ pay tribute and obedience to his temporal
 “ successors. ” The tribute was ascertained at
 two pieces of gold for the head of every Christian; but old men, monks, women, and children, of both sexes, under sixteen years of age, were exempted from this personal assessment: the Copts above and below Memphis swore allegiance to the caliph, and promised an hospitable entertainment of three days to every Musulman who should travel through their country. By this charter of security, the ecclesiastical and civil tyranny of the Melchites was destroyed¹⁰⁹: the anathemas of St. Cyril were thundered from every pulpit; and the sacred edifices, with the patrimony of the church, were restored to the national communion of the Jacobites, who enjoyed without moderation the moment of triumph and revenge. At the pressing summons of Amrou, their patriarch Benjamin emerged from his desert, and, after the first interview, the courteous Arab affected to declare, that he had never conversed with a Christian priest of more innocent manners and more venerable aspect¹¹⁰. In the march from Memphis to Alexandria the lieutenant of Omar entrusted his safety to the zeal and gratitude of the Egyptians: the roads and bridges were diligently repaired; and in every step of his progress, he could depend on a constant supply of provisions and intelligence. The Greeks of Egypt, whose numbers could scarcely equal a tenth of the natives, were overwhelmed by the universal

C H A P. defection; they had ever been hated, they were
 LI. no longer feared: the magistrate fled from his tribunal, the bishop from his altar; and the distant garrisons were surprised or starved by the surrounding multitudes. Had not the Nile afforded a safe and ready conveyance to the sea, not an individual could have escaped, who by birth, or language, or office, or religion, was connected with their odious name.

Siege and
 conquest of
 Alexandria.

By the retreat of the Greeks from the provinces of Upper Egypt, a considerable force was collected in the island of Delta: the natural and artificial channels of the Nile afforded a succession of strong and defensible posts; and the road to Alexandria was laboriously cleared by the victory of the Saracens in two and twenty days of general or partial combat. In their annals of conquest, the siege of Alexandria^{III} is perhaps the most arduous and important enterprise. The first trading city in the world was abundantly replenished with the means of subsistence and defence. Her numerous inhabitants fought for the dearest of human rights, religion and property; and the enmity of the natives seemed to exclude them from the common benefit of peace and toleration. The sea was continually open; and if Heraclius had been awake to the public distress, fresh armies of Romans and Barbarians might have been poured into the harbour to save the second capital of the empire. A circumference of ten miles would have scattered the forces of the Greeks, and favoured the stratagems

of an active enemy; but the two sides of an oblong square were covered by the sea and the lake Macerotis, and each of the narrow ends exposed a front of no more than ten furlongs. The efforts of the Arabs were not inadequate to the difficulty of the attempt and the value of the prize. From the throne of Medina, the eyes of Omar were fixed on the camp and city: his voice excited to arms the Arabian tribes and the veterans of Syria; and the merit of an holy war was recommended by the peculiar fame and fertility of Egypt. Anxious for the ruin or expulsion of their tyrants, the faithful natives devoted their labours to the service of Amrou; some sparks of martial spirit were perhaps rekindled by the example of their allies; and the sanguine hopes of Mokawkas had fixed his sepulchre in the church of St. John of Alexandria. Eutychius the patriarch observes, that the Saracens fought with the courage of lions; they repulsed the frequent and almost daily sallies of the besieged, and soon assaulted in their turn the walls and towers of the city. In every attack, the sword, the banner of Amrou, glittered in the van of the Moslems. On a memorable day, he was betrayed by his imprudent valour: his followers who had entered the citadel were driven back; and the general, with a friend and a slave, remained a prisoner in the hands of the Christians. When Amrou was conducted before the præfect, he remembered his dignity and forgot his situation; a lofty demeanour, and resolute language, revealed the lieutenant

CHAP. of the caliph, and the battle-axe of a soldier
 LI. was already raised to strike off the head of
 the audacious captive. His life was saved by
 the readiness of his slave, who instantly gave his
 master a blow on the face, and commanded him,
 with an angry tone, to be silent in the presence
 of his superiors. The credulous Greek was de-
 ceived: he listened to the offer of a treaty, and
 his prisoners were dismissed in the hope of a
 more respectable embassy, till the joyful accla-
 mations of the camp announced the return of
 their general, and insulted the folly of the in-
 fidels. At length, after a siege of fourteen
 months¹¹², and the loss of three and twenty
 thousand men, the Saracens prevailed: the Greeks
 embarked their dispirited and diminished numbers,
 and the standard of Mahomet was planted on
 the walls of the capital of Egypt. "I have
 " taken," said Amrou to the caliph, " the great
 " city of the West. It is impossible for me to
 " enumerate the variety of its riches and beauty;
 " and I shall content myself with observing,
 " that it contains four thousand palaces, four
 " thousand baths, four hundred theatres or pla-
 " ces of amusement, twelve thousand shops for
 " the sale of vegetable food, and forty thousand
 " tributary Jews. The town has been subdued
 " by force of arms, without treaty or capitula-
 " tion, and the Moslems are impatient to seize
 " the fruits of their victory¹¹³." The commander
 of the faithful rejected with firmness the idea
 of pillage, and directed his lieutenant to reserve
 the

the wealth and revenue of Alexandria for the public service and the propagation of the faith: the inhabitants were numbered; a tribute was imposed; the zeal and resentment of the Jacobites were curbed, and the Melchites who submitted to the Arabian yoke, were indulged in the obscure but tranquil exercise of their worship. The intelligence of this disgraceful and calamitous event afflicted the declining health of the emperor; and Heraclius died of a dropfy about seven weeks after the loss of Alexandria¹¹⁴. Under the minority of his grandson, the clamours of a people, deprived of their daily sustenance, compelled the Byzantine court to undertake the recovery of the capital of Egypt. In the space of four years, the harbour and fortifications of Alexandria were twice occupied by a fleet and army of Romans. They were twice expelled by the valour of Amrou, who was recalled by the domestic peril from the distant wars of Tripoli and Nubia. But the facility of the attempt, the repetition of the insult, and the obstinacy of the resistance provoked him to swear, that if a third time he drove the infidels into the sea, he would render Alexandria as accessible on all sides as the house of a prostitute. Faithful to his promise, he dismantled several parts of the walls and towers, but the people was spared in the chastisement of the city, and the mosch of *Mercy* was erected on the spot where the victorious general had stopped the fury of his troops.

I should deceive the expectation of the reader, The Alexan-
 VOL. IX. T drian library.

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if I passed in silence the fate of the Alexandrian library, as it is described by the learned Abulpharagius. The spirit of Amrou was more curious and liberal than that of his brethren, and in his leisure hours, the Arabian chief was pleased with the conversation of John, the last disciple of Ammonius, and who derived the surname of *Philoponus*, from his laborious studies of grammar and philosophy¹¹⁵. Emboldened by this familiar intercourse, Philoponus presumed to solicit a gift, inestimable in *his* opinion, contemptible in that of the Barbarians; the royal library, which alone, among the spoils of Alexandria, had not been appropriated by the visit and the seal of the conqueror. Amrou was inclined to gratify the wish of the grammarian, but his rigid integrity refused to alienate the minutest object without the consent of the Caliph; and the well-known answer of Omar was inspired by the ignorance of a fanatic. “If these writings of the Greeks agree with the book of God, they are useless and need not be preserved: if they disagree, they are pernicious and ought to be destroyed.” The sentence was executed with blind obedience: the volumes of paper or parchment were distributed to the four thousand baths of the city; and such was their incredible multitude, that six months were barely sufficient for the consumption of this precious fuel. Since the Dynasties of Abulpharagius¹¹⁶ have been given to the world in a Latin version, the tale has been repeatedly transcribed; and every scholar, with pious indignation,

has deplored the irreparable shipwreck of the learning, the arts, and the genius, of antiquity. For my own part, I am strongly tempted to deny both the fact and the consequences. The fact is indeed marvellous; "Read and wonder!" says the historian himself: and the solitary report of a stranger who wrote at the end of six hundred years on the confines of Media, is overbalanced by the silence of two annalists of a more early date, both Christians, both natives of Egypt, and the most ancient of whom, the patriarch Eutychius, has amply described the conquest of Alexandria¹¹⁷. The rigid sentence of Omar is repugnant to the sound and orthodox precept of the Mahometan casuists: they expressly declare, that the religious books of the Jews and Christians, which are acquired by the right of war, should never be committed to the flames; and that the works of profane science, historians or poets, physicians or philosophers, may be lawfully applied to the use of the faithful¹¹⁸. A more destructive zeal may perhaps be attributed to the first successors of Mahomet; yet in this instance, the conflagration would have speedily expired in the deficiency of materials. I shall not recapitulate the disasters of the Alexandrian library, the involuntary flame that was kindled by Cæsar in his own defence¹¹⁹, or the mischievous bigotry of the Christians who studied to destroy the monuments of idolatry¹²⁰. But if we gradually descend from the age of the Antonines to that of Theodosius, we shall learn from a chain of

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contemporary witnesses, that the royal palace and the temple of Serapis, no longer contained the four, or the seven, hundred thousand volumes, which had been assembled by the curiosity and magnificence of the Ptolemies ¹²¹. Perhaps the church and seat of the patriarchs might be enriched with a repository of books; but if the ponderous mass of Arian and Monophysite controversy were indeed consumed in the public baths ¹²², a philosopher may allow, with a smile, that it was ultimately devoted to the benefit of mankind. I sincerely regret the more valuable libraries which have been involved in the ruin of the Roman empire; but when I seriously compute the lapse of ages, the waste of ignorance, and the calamities of war, our treasures, rather than our losses, are the object of my surprise. Many curious and interesting facts are buried in oblivion; the three great historians of Rome have been transmitted to our hands in a mutilated state, and we are deprived of many pleasing compositions of the lyric, iambic, and dramatic poetry of the Greeks. Yet we should gratefully remember, that the mischances of time and accident have spared the classic works to which the suffrage of antiquity ¹²³ had adjudged the first place of genius and glory: the teachers of ancient knowledge, who are still extant, had perused and compared the writings of their predecessors ¹²⁴; nor can it fairly be presumed that any important truth, any useful discovery in art or nature, has been snatched away from the curiosity of modern ages.

In the administration of Egypt¹²⁵, Amrou C H A P.
 balanced the demands of justice and policy; the LI.
 interest of the people of the law, who were de- Administra-
 fended by God; and of the people of the alli- tion of
 ance, who were protected by man. In the Egypt.
 recent tumult of conquest and deliverance, the
 tongue of the Copts and the sword of the Arabs
 were most adverse to the tranquillity of the pro-
 vince. To the former, Amrou declared, that
 faction and falsehood would be doubly chastised;
 by the punishment of the accusers, whom he
 should detest as his personal enemies, and by the
 promotion of their innocent brethren, whom
 their envy had laboured to injure and supplant.
 He excited the latter by the motives of religion
 and honour to sustain the dignity of their cha-
 racter, to endear themselves by a modest and
 temperate conduct to God and the caliph, to
 spare and protect a people who had trusted to
 their faith, and to content themselves with the
 legitimate and splendid rewards of their victory.
 In the management of the revenue he disap-
 proved the simple but oppressive mode of a
 capitation, and preferred with reason a propor-
 tion of taxes, deducted on every branch from
 the clear profits of agriculture and commerce.
 A third part of the tribute was appropriated to
 the annual repairs of the dykes and canals, so
 essential to the public welfare. Under his ad-
 ministration the fertility of Egypt supplied the
 dearth of Arabia; and a string of camels, laden
 with corn and provisions, covered almost with-

CHAP. out an interval the long road from Memphis to
 LI. Medina¹²⁶. But the genius of Amrou soon re-
 newed the maritime communication which had
 been attempted or atchieved by the Pharaohs, the
 Ptolemies, or the Cæsars; and a canal, at least
 eighty miles in length, was opened from the
 Nile to the Red Sea. This inland navigation,
 which would have joined the Mediterranean and
 the Indian ocean, was soon discontinued as use-
 less and dangerous: the throne was removed
 from Medina to Damascus; and the Grecian
 fleets might have explored a passage to the holy
 cities of Arabia¹²⁷.

Riches and
 populous-
 ness.

Of his new conquest, the caliph Omar had an
 imperfect knowledge from the voice of fame and
 the legends of the Koran. He requested that his
 lieutenant would place before his eyes the realm
 of Pharaoh and the Amalekites; and the answer
 of Amrou exhibits a lively and not unfaithful
 picture of that singular country¹²⁸. “ O com-
 “ mander of the faithful, Egypt is a compound
 “ of black earth and green plants, between a
 “ pulverised mountain and a red sand. The dis-
 “ tance from Syene to the sea is a month’s
 “ journey for an horseman. Along the valley
 “ descends a river, on which the blessing of
 “ the Most High reposes both in the evening
 “ and morning, and which rises and falls with
 “ the revolutions of the sun and moon. When
 “ the annual dispensation of providence unlocks
 “ the springs and fountains that nourish the earth,
 “ the Nile rolls his swelling and founding waters

“ through the realm of Egypt: the fields are
 “ overspread by the salutary flood; and the vil-
 “ lages communicate with each other in their
 “ painted barks. The retreat of the inundation
 “ deposits a fertilizing mud for the reception of
 “ the various seeds: the crowds of husbandmen
 “ who blacken the land may be compared to a
 “ swarm of industrious ants; and their native in-
 “ dolence is quickened by the lash of the task-
 “ master, and the promise of the flowers and
 “ fruits of a plentiful encrease. Their hope is
 “ seldom deceived; but the riches which they
 “ extract from the wheat, the barley, and the
 “ rice, the legumes, the fruit-trees, and the
 “ cattle, are unequally shared between those who
 “ labour and those who possess. According to
 “ the vicissitudes of the seasons, the face of the
 “ country is adorned with a *silver* wave, a verdant
 “ *emerald*, and the deep yellow of a *golden*
 “ harvest ¹²⁹.” Yet this beneficial order is some-
 times interrupted; and the long delay and sud-
 den swell of the river in the first year of the con-
 quest might afford some colour to an edifying
 fable. It is said, that the annual sacrifice of a
 virgin ¹³⁰ had been interdicted by the piety of
 Omar; and that the Nile lay fullen and inactive
 in his shallow bed, till the mandate of the caliph
 was cast into the obedient stream, which rose in
 a single night to the height of sixteen cubits.
 The admiration of the Arabs for their new con-
 quest encouraged the licence of their romantic
 spirit. We may read, in the gravest authors,

CHAP. that Egypt was crowded with twenty thousand
 LI. cities or villages¹³¹: *that*, exclusive of the Greeks
 and Arabs, the Copts alone were found, on the
 assessment, six millions of tributary subjects¹³²,
 or twenty millions of either sex and of every
 age: *that* three hundred millions of gold or
 silver were annually paid to the treasury of the
 caliph¹³³. Our reason must be startled by these
 extravagant assertions; and they will become
 more palpable, if we assume the compass and
 measure the extent of habitable ground: a valley
 from the tropic to Memphis, seldom broader
 than twelve miles, and the triangle of the Delta,
 a flat surface of two thousand one hundred square
 leagues, compose a twelfth part of the magnitude
 of France¹³⁴. A more accurate research will
 justify a more reasonable estimate. The three
 hundred millions, created by the error of a scribe,
 are reduced to the decent revenue of four mil-
 lions three hundred thousand pieces of gold, of
 which nine hundred thousand were consumed
 by the pay of the soldiers¹³⁵. Two authentic
 lists, of the present and of the twelfth century,
 are circumscribed within the respectable number
 of two thousand seven hundred villages and
 towns¹³⁶. After a long residence at Cairo, a
 French consul has ventured to assign about four
 millions of Mahometans, Christians, and Jews,
 for the ample, though not incredible, scope, of
 the population of Egypt¹³⁷.

AFRICA.
 First invasion

IV. The conquest of Africa, from the Nile to
 the Atlantic ocean¹³⁸, was first attempted by the

arms of the caliph Othman. The pious design was approved by the companions of Mahomet and the chiefs of the tribes; and twenty thousand Arabs marched from Medina, with the gifts and the blessing of the commander of the faithful. They were joined in the camp of Memphis by twenty thousand of their countrymen; and the conduct of the war was entrusted to Abdallah¹³⁹, the son of Said and the foster-brother of the caliph, who had lately supplanted the conqueror and lieutenant of Egypt. Yet the favour of the prince, and the merit of his favourite, could not obliterate the guilt of his apostacy. The early conversion of Abdallah, and his skilful pen, had recommended him to the important office of transcribing the sheets of the Koran: he betrayed his trust, corrupted the text, derided the errors which he had made, and fled to Mecca to escape the justice, and expose the ignorance, of the apostle. After the conquest of Mecca, he fell prostrate at the feet of Mahomet: his tears, and the entreaties of Othman, extorted a reluctant pardon; but the prophet declared that he had so long hesitated, to allow time for some zealous disciple to avenge his injury in the blood of the apostate. With apparent fidelity and effective merit, he served the religion which it was no longer his interest to desert: his birth and talents gave him an honourable rank among the Koreish; and, in a nation of cavalry, Abdallah was renowned as the boldest and most dextrous horseman of Arabia. At the head of forty thousand

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by Abdallah,
A. D. 647.

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The præfect
Gregory and
his daughter.

Moslems, he advanced from Egypt into the unknown countries of the West. The sands of Barca might be impervious to a Roman legion; but the Arabs were attended by their faithful camels; and the natives of the desert beheld without terror the familiar aspect of the soil and climate. After a painful march, they pitched their tents before the walls of Tripoli¹⁴⁰, a maritime city, in which the *name*, the wealth, and the inhabitants, of the province had gradually centered, and which now maintains the third rank among the states of Barbary. A reinforcement of Greeks was surprised and cut in pieces on the sea-shore; but the fortifications of Tripoli resisted the first assaults; and the Saracens were tempted by the approach of the præfect Gregory¹⁴¹ to relinquish the labours of the siege for the perils and the hopes of a decisive action. If his standard was followed by one hundred and twenty thousand men, the regular bands of the empire must have been lost in the naked and disorderly crowd of Africans and Moors, who formed the strength, or rather the numbers, of his host. He rejected with indignation the option of the Koran or the tribute; and during several days, the two armies were fiercely engaged from the dawn of light to the hour of noon, when their fatigue and the excessive heat compelled them to seek shelter and refreshment in their respective camps. The daughter of Gregory, a maid of incomparable beauty and spirit, is said to have fought by his side: from her earliest

youth she was trained to mount on horseback, to draw the bow, and to wield the scymetar; and the richness of her arms and apparel were conspicuous in the foremost ranks of the battle. Her hand, with an hundred thousand pieces of gold, was offered for the head of the Arabian general, and the youths of Africa were excited by the prospect of the glorious prize. At the pressing solicitation of his brethren, Abdallah withdrew his person from the field; but the Saracens were discouraged by the retreat of their leader, and the repetition of these equal or unsuccessful conflicts.

A noble Arabian, who afterwards became the adversary of Ali and the father of a caliph, had signalized his valour in Egypt, and Zobeir¹⁴² was the first who planted a scaling-ladder against the walls of Babylon. In the African war he was detached from the standard of Abdallah. On the news of the battle, Zobeir, with twelve companions, cut his way through the camp of the Greeks, and pressed forwards, without tasting either food or repose, to partake of the dangers of his brethren. He cast his eyes round the field: "Where," said he, "is our general?" "In his tent." "Is the tent a station for the general of the Moslems?" Abdallah represented with a blush the importance of his own life, and the temptation that was held forth by the Roman præfect. "Retort," said Zobeir, "on the infidels their ungenerous attempt. Proclaim through the ranks, that the head of Gregory shall be

Victory of
the Arabs.

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LI.

“ repaid with his captive daughter, and the
“ equal sum of one hundred thousand pieces of
“ gold.” To the courage and discretion of Zobeir
the lieutenant of the caliph entrusted the execution
of his own stratagem, which inclined the
long-disputed balance in favour of the Saracens.
Supplying by activity and artifice the deficiency
of numbers, a part of their forces lay concealed
in their tents, while the remainder prolonged an
irregular skirmish with the enemy, till the sun
was high in the heavens. On both sides they
retired with fainting steps: their horses were un-
bridled, their armour was laid aside, and the
hostile nations prepared, or seemed to prepare,
for the refreshment of the evening, and the en-
counter of the ensuing day. On a sudden, the
charge was sounded; the Arabian camp poured
forth a swarm of fresh and intrepid warriors; and
the long line of the Greeks and Africans was
surprised, assaulted, overturned, by new squadrons
of the faithful, who, to the eye of fanaticism,
might appear as a band of angels descending
from the sky. The præfect himself was slain by
the hand of Zobeir: his daughter, who sought
revenge and death, was surrounded and made
prisoner: and the fugitives involved in their
disaster the town of Sufetula, to which they
escaped from the sabres and lances of the Arabs.
Sufetula was built one hundred and fifty miles
to the south of Carthage: a gentle declivity is
watered by a running stream, and shaded by a
grove of juniper-trees; and, in the ruins of a

triumphal arch, a portico, and three temples of the Corinthian order, curiosity may yet admire the magnificence of the Romans¹⁴³. After the fall of this opulent city, the provincials and Barbarians implored on all sides the mercy of the conqueror. His vanity or his zeal might be flattered by offers of tribute or professions of faith: but his losses, his fatigues, and the progress of an epidemical disease, prevented a solid establishment; and the Saracens, after a campaign of fifteen months, retreated to the confines of Egypt, with the captives and the wealth of their African expedition. The caliph's fifth was granted to a favourite, on the nominal payment of five hundred thousand pieces of gold¹⁴⁴; but the state was doubly injured by this fallacious transaction, if each foot-soldier had shared one thousand, and each horseman three thousand, pieces, in the real division of the plunder. The author of the death of Gregory was expected to have claimed the most precious reward of the victory: from his silence it might be presumed that he had fallen in the battle, till the tears and exclamations of the præfect's daughter at the sight of Zobeir revealed the valour and modesty of that gallant soldier. The unfortunate virgin was offered, and almost rejected as a slave, by her father's murderer, who coolly declared that his sword was consecrated to the service of religion; and that he laboured for a recompense far above the charms of mortal beauty, or the riches of this transitory life. A reward congenial to his temper, was the honourable commission

C H A P. of announcing to the caliph Othman the success
 LI. of his arms. The companions, the chiefs, and the people, were assembled in the mosque of Medina, to hear the interesting narrative of Zobeir; and, as the orator forgot nothing except the merit of his own counsels and actions, the name of Abdallah was joined by the Arabians with the heroic names of Caled and Amrou¹⁴⁵.

Progress of
 the Saracens
 in Africa,
 A. D.
 665—689.

The western conquests of the Saracens were suspended near twenty years, till their dissensions were composed by the establishment of the house of Ommiyah: and the caliph Moawiyah was invited by the cries of the Africans themselves. The successors of Heraclius had been informed of the tribute which they had been compelled to stipulate with the Arabs; but instead of being moved to pity and relieve their distress, they imposed, as an equivalent or a fine, a second tribute of a similar amount. The ears of the Byzantine ministers were shut against the complaints of their poverty and ruin: their despair was reduced to prefer the dominion of a single master; and the extortions of the patriarch of Carthage, who was invested with civil and military power, provoked the sectaries, and even the Catholics, of the Roman province to abjure the religion as well as the authority of their tyrants. The first lieutenant of Moawiyah acquired a just renown, subdued an important city, defeated an army of thirty thousand Greeks, swept away fourscore thousand captives, and enriched with their spoils the bold adventurers of Syria

and Egypt ¹⁴⁶. But the title of conqueror of Africa is more justly due to his successor Akbah. He marched from Damascus at the head of ten thousand of the bravest Arabs; and the genuine force of the Moslems was enlarged by the doubtful aid and conversion of many thousand Barbarians. It would be difficult, nor is it necessary, to trace the accurate line of the progress of Akbah. The interior regions have been peopled by the Orientals with fictitious armies and imaginary citadels. In the warlike province of Zab or Numidia, fourscore thousand of the natives might assemble in arms; but the number of three hundred and sixty towns is incompatible with the ignorance or decay of husbandry ¹⁴⁷; and a circumference of three leagues will not be justified by the ruins of Erbe or Lambesa, the ancient metropolis of that inland country. As we approach the sea-coast, the well-known cities of Bugia ¹⁴⁸ and Tangier ¹⁴⁹ define the more certain limits of the Saracen victories. A remnant of trade still adheres to the commodious harbour of Bugia, which, in a more prosperous age, is said to have contained about twenty thousand houses; and the plenty of iron which is dug from the adjacent mountains might have supplied a braver people with the instruments of defence. The remote position and venerable antiquity of Tingi, or Tangier, have been decorated by the Greek and Arabian fables; but the figurative expressions of the latter, that the walls were constructed of brass, and that the roofs were covered with gold

C H A P.

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C H A P. and silver, may be interpreted as the emblems
 LI. of strength and opulence. The province of Mauritania Tingitana¹⁵⁰, which assumed the name of the capital, had been imperfectly discovered and settled by the Romans; the five colonies were confined to a narrow pale, and the more southern parts were seldom explored except by the agents of luxury, who searched the forests for ivory and the citron wood¹⁵¹, and the shores of the Ocean for the purple shell-fish. The fearless Akbah plunged into the heart of the country, traversed the wilderness in which his successors erected the splendid capitals of Fez and Morocco¹⁵², and at length penetrated to the verge of the Atlantic and the great desert. The river Sus descends from the western sides of mount Atlas, fertilises, like the Nile, the adjacent soil, and falls into the sea at a moderate distance from the Canary, or Fortunate, islands. Its banks were inhabited by the last of the Moors, a race of savages, without laws, or discipline, or religion: they were astonished by the strange and irresistible terrors of the Oriental arms; and as they possessed neither gold nor silver, the richest spoil was the beauty of the female captives, some of whom were afterwards sold for a thousand pieces of gold. The career, though not the zeal, of Akbah was checked by the prospect of a boundless ocean. He spurred his horse into the waves, and raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed with the tone of a fanatic: "Great God! if my
 " course were not stopped by this sea, I would
 still

“ still go on, to the unknown kingdoms of the
 “ West, preaching the unity of thy holy name,
 “ and putting to the sword the rebellious nations
 “ who worship any other gods than thee ”.”

C H A P.

LI.

Yet this Mahometan Alexander, who fought for new worlds, was unable to preserve his recent conquests. By the universal defection of the Greeks and Africans, he was recalled from the shores of the Atlantic, and the surrounding multitudes left him only the resource of an honourable death. The last scene was dignified by an example of national virtue. An ambitious chief, who had disputed the command and failed in the attempt, was led about as a prisoner in the camp of the Arabian general. The insurgents had trusted to his discontent and revenge; he disdained their offers and revealed their designs. In the hour of danger, the grateful Akbah unlocked his fetters, and advised him to retire; he chose to die under the banner of his rival. Embracing as friends and martyrs, they unsheathed their scymetars, broke their scabbards, and maintained an obstinate combat, till they fell by each others side on the last of their slaughtered countrymen. The third general or governor of Africa, Zuheir, avenged and encountered the fate of his predecessor. He vanquished the natives in many battles; he was overthrown by a powerful army, which Constantinople had sent to the relief of Carthage.

It had been the frequent practice of the Moorish tribes to join the invaders, to share the plunder, to profess the faith, and to revolt to their savage

Foundation
 of Cairoan,
 A. D.

670—675.

CHAP.
LI.

state of independence and idolatry, on the first retreat or misfortune of the Moslems. The prudence of Akbah had proposed to found an Arabian colony in the heart of Africa; a citadel that might curb the levity of the Barbarians, a place of refuge to secure, against the accidents of war, the wealth and the families of the Saracens. With this view, and under the modest title of the station of a caravan, he planted this colony in the fiftieth year of the Hegira. In its present decay, Cairoan¹⁵⁴ still holds the second rank in the kingdom of Tunis, from which it is distant about fifty miles to the south¹⁵⁵: its inland situation, twelve miles westward of the sea, has protected the city from the Greek and Sicilian fleets. When the wild beasts and serpents were extirpated, when the forest, or rather wilderness, was cleared, the vestiges of a Roman town were discovered in a sandy plain: the vegetable food of Cairoan is brought from afar; and the scarcity of springs constrains the inhabitants to collect in cisterns and reservoirs a precarious supply of rain-water. These obstacles were subdued by the industry of Akbah; he traced a circumference of three thousand and six hundred paces, which he encompassed with a brick wall; in the space of five years, the governor's palace was surrounded with a sufficient number of private habitations; a spacious mosque was supported by five hundred columns of granite, porphyry, and Numidian marble; and Cairoan became the seat of learning as well as of empire. But these were the glories of a later age; the new

colony was shaken by the successive defeats of Akbah and Zuheir, and the western expeditions were again interrupted by the civil discord of the Arabian monarchy. The son of the valiant Zobeir maintained a war of twelve years, a siege of seven months against the house of Ommiyah. Abdallah was said to unite the fierceness of the lion with the subtlety of the fox; but if he inherited the courage, he was devoid of the generosity, of his father ¹⁵⁶.

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The return of domestic peace allowed the caliph Abdalmalek to resume the conquest of Africa; the standard was delivered to Hassan governor of Egypt, and the revenue of that kingdom, with an army of forty thousand men, was consecrated to the important service. In the vicissitudes of war, the interior provinces had been alternately won and lost by the Saracens. But the sea-coast still remained in the hands of the Greeks; the predecessors of Hassan had respected the name and fortifications of Carthage; and the number of its defenders was recruited by the fugitives of Cades and Tripoli. The arms of Hassan were bolder and more fortunate: he reduced and pillaged the metropolis of Africa; and the mention of scaling-ladders may justify the suspicion that he anticipated, by a sudden assault, the more tedious operations of a regular siege. But the joy of the conquerors was soon disturbed by the appearance of the Christian succours. The præfect and patrician John, a general of experience and renown, embarked at Constantinople the forces of the Eastern

Conquest of
Carthage,
A. D.
692—698.

G H A P. empire ¹⁵⁷; they were joined by the ships and
 LI. soldiers of Sicily, and a powerful reinforcement
 of Goths ¹⁵⁸ was obtained from the fears and reli-
 gion of the Spanish monarch. The weight of the
 confederate navy broke the chain that guarded
 the entrance of the harbour; the Arabs retired to
 Cairoan, or Tripoli; the Christians landed; the
 citizens hailed the ensign of the cross, and the
 winter was idly wasted in the dream of victory
 or deliverance. But Africa was irrecoverably lost:
 the zeal and resentment of the commander of the
 faithful ¹⁵⁹ prepared in the ensuing spring a more
 numerous armament by sea and land; and the
 patrician in his turn was compelled to evacuate
 the post and fortifications of Carthage. A second
 battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Utica:
 the Greeks and Goths were again defeated; and
 their timely embarkation saved them from the
 sword of Hassan, who had invested the slight and
 insufficient rampart of their camp. Whatever yet
 remained of Carthage, was delivered to the flames,
 and the colony of Dido ¹⁶⁰ and Cæsar lay desolate
 above two hundred years, till a part, perhaps a
 twentieth, of the old circumference was repeopled
 by the first of the Fatimite caliphs. In the begin-
 ning of the sixteenth century, the second capital
 of the West was represented by a mosch, a col-
 lege without students, twenty-five or thirty shops,
 and the huts of five hundred peasants, who, in
 their abject poverty, displayed the arrogance of
 the Punic senators. Even that paltry village was
 swept away by the Spaniards whom Charles the

Fifth had stationed in the fortrefs of the Goletta. The ruins of Carthage have perished; and the place might be unknown if some broken arches of an aqueduct did not guide the footsteps of the inquisitive traveller ¹⁶¹.

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The Greeks were expelled, but the Arabians were not yet masters of the country. In the interior provinces the Moors or *Berbers* ¹⁶², so feeble under the first Cæsars, so formidable to the Byzantine princes, maintained a disorderly resistance to the religion and power of the successors of Mahomet. Under the standard of their queen Cahina the independent tribes acquired some degree of union and discipline; and as the Moors respected in their females the character of a prophetess, they attacked the invaders with an enthusiasm similar to their own. The veteran bands of Hassan were inadequate to the defence of Africa: the conquests of an age were lost in a single day; and the Arabian chief, overwhelmed by the torrent, retired to the confines of Egypt, and expected, five years, the promised succours of the caliph. After the retreat of the Saracens, the victorious prophetess assembled the Moorish chiefs, and recommended a measure of strange and savage policy. "Our cities," said she, "and the gold and silver which they contain, perpetually attract the arms of the Arabs. These vile metals are not the objects of *our* ambition; we content ourselves with the simple productions of the earth. Let us destroy these cities; let us bury in their ruins those pernicious treasures; and when the avarice of our foes shall be destitute

Final conquest of Africa,
A. D.
698—709.

C H A P.

LI.

“ of temptation, perhaps they will cease to disturb
 “ the tranquillity of a warlike people.” The
 proposal was accepted with unanimous applause.
 From Tangier to Tripoli the buildings, or at least
 the fortifications, were demolished, the fruit-trees
 were cut down, the means of subsistence were
 extirpated, a fertile and populous garden was
 changed into a desert, and the historians of a more
 recent period could discern the frequent traces of
 the prosperity and devastation of their ancestors.
 Such is the tale of the modern Arabians. Yet I
 strongly suspect that their ignorance of antiquity,
 the love of the marvellous, and the fashion of
 extolling the philosophy of Barbarians, has induced
 them to describe, as one voluntary act, the cala-
 mities of three hundred years since the first fury
 of the Donatists and Vandals. In the progress of
 the revolt Cahina had most probably contributed
 her share of destruction; and the alarm of universal
 ruin might terrify and alienate the cities that had
 reluctantly yielded to her unworthy yoke. They
 no longer hoped, perhaps they no longer wished,
 the return of their Byzantine sovereigns: their
 present servitude was not alleviated by the bene-
 fits of order and justice; and the most zealous
 Catholic must prefer the imperfect truths of the
 Koran to the blind and rude idolatry of the Moors.
 The general of the Saracens was again received as
 the saviour of the province: the friends of civil
 society conspired against the savages of the land;
 and the royal prophetess was slain in the first battle
 which overturned the baseless fabric of her supersti-

tion and empire. The same spirit revived under the successor of Hassan: it was finally quelled by the activity of Musa and his two sons; but the number of the rebels may be presumed from that of three hundred thousand captives; sixty thousand of whom, the caliph's fifth, were sold for the profit of the public treasury. Thirty thousand of the Barbarian youth were enlisted in the troops; and the pious labours of Musa, to inculcate the knowledge and practice of the Koran, accustomed the Africans to obey the apostle of God and the commander of the faithful. In their climate and government, their diet and habitation, the wandering Moors resembled the Bedowens of the desert. With the religion, they were proud to adopt the language, name, and origin, of Arabs: the blood of the strangers and natives was insensibly mingled; and from the Euphrates to the Atlantic the same nation might seem to be diffused over the sandy plains of Asia and Africa. Yet I will not deny that fifty thousand tents of pure Arabians might be transported over the Nile, and scattered through the Libyan desert; and I am not ignorant that five of the Moorish tribes still retain their *barbarous* idiom, with the appellation and character of *white Africans* ¹⁶³.

C H A P.
LI.

Adoption of
the Moors.

V. In the progress of conquest from the north and south, the Goths and the Saracens encountered each other on the confines of Europe and Africa. In the opinion of the latter, the difference of religion is a reasonable ground of enmity and warfare ¹⁶⁴. As early as the time of Othman ¹⁶⁵ their piratical

SPAIN.
First tempta-
tions and de-
signs of the
Arabs,
A. D. 709.

C H A P. II. squadrons had ravaged the coast of Andalusia¹⁶⁶; nor had they forgotten the relief of Carthage by the Gothic succours. In that age, as well as in the present, the kings of Spain were possessed of the fortrefs of Ceuta; one of the columns of Hercules, which is divided by a narrow streight from the opposite pillar or point of Europe. A small portion of Mauritania was still wanting to the African conquest; but Musa, in the pride of victory, was repulsed from the walls of Ceuta, by the vigilance and courage of count Julian, the general of the Goths. From his disappointment and perplexity, Musa was relieved by an unexpected message of the Christian chief, who offered his place, his person, and his sword, to the successors of Mahomet, and solicited the disgraceful honour of introducing their arms into the heart of Spain¹⁶⁷. If we enquire into the cause of his treachery, the Spaniards will repeat the popular story of his daughter Cava¹⁶⁸; of a virgin who was seduced, or ravished, by her sovereign; of a father who sacrificed his religion and country to the thirst of revenge. The passions of princes have often been licentious and destructive; but this well-known tale, romantic in itself, is indifferently supported by external evidence; and the history of Spain will suggest some motives of interest and policy more congenial to the breast of a veteran statesman¹⁶⁹. After the decease or deposition of Witiza, his two sons were supplanted by the ambition of Roderic, a noble Goth, whose father, the duke or governor of a province, had fallen a victim to

State of the
Gothic mo-
narchy.

the preceding tyranny. The monarchy was still elective; but the sons of Witiza, educated on the steps of the throne, were impatient of a private station. Their resentment was the more dangerous, as it was varnished with the dissimulation of courts: their followers were excited by the remembrance of favours and the promise of a revolution; and their uncle Oppas, archbishop of Toledo and Seville, was the first person in the church, and the second in the state. It is probable that Julian was involved in the disgrace of the unsuccessful faction, that he had little to hope and much to fear from the new reign; and that the imprudent king could not forget or forgive the injuries which Roderic and his family had sustained. The merit and influence of the count rendered him an useful or formidable subject: his estates were ample, his followers bold and numerous, and it was too fatally shewn that, by his Andalusian and Mauritanian commands, he held in his hand the keys of the Spanish monarchy. Too feeble, however, to meet his sovereign in arms, he sought the aid of a foreign power; and his rash invitation of the Moors and Arabs produced the calamities of eight hundred years. In his epistles, or in a personal interview, he revealed the wealth and nakedness of his country; the weakness of an unpopular prince; the degeneracy of an effeminate people. The Goths were no longer the victorious Barbarians, who had humbled the pride of Rome, despoiled the queen of nations, and penetrated from the Danube to the Atlantic ocean. Secluded from the

CHAP.
LI.

world by the Pyrenæan mountains, the successors of Alaric had slumbered in a long peace: the walls of the cities were mouldered into dust: the youth had abandoned the exercise of arms; and the presumption of their ancient renown would expose them in a field of battle to the first assault of the invaders. The ambitious Saracen was fired by the ease and importance of the attempt; but the execution was delayed till he had consulted the commander of the faithful; and his messenger returned with the permission of Walid to annex the unknown kingdoms of the west to the religion and throne of the caliphs. In his residence of Tangier, Musa, with secrecy and caution, continued his correspondence and hastened his preparations. But the remorse of the conspirators was soothed by the fallacious assurance that he should content himself with the glory and spoil, without aspiring to establish the Moslems beyond the sea that separates Africa from Europe ¹⁷⁰.

The first
descent of
the Arabs,
A. D. 710,
July.

Before Musa would trust an army of the faithful to the traitors and infidels of a foreign land, he made a less dangerous trial of their strength and veracity. One hundred Arabs, and four hundred Africans, passed over, in four vessels, from Tangier or Ceuta; the place of their descent on the opposite shore of the strait, is marked by the name of Tari their chief; and the date of this memorable event ¹⁷¹ is fixed to the month of Ramadan, of the ninety-first year of the Hegira, to the month of July, seven hundred and forty-eight years from the Spanish æra of Cæsar ¹⁷², seven

hundred and ten after the birth of Christ. From their first station, they marched eighteen miles through an hilly country to the castle and town of Julian¹⁷³; on which (it is still called Algezire) they bestowed the name of the Green island, from a verdant cape that advances into the sea. Their hospitable entertainment, the Christians who joined their standard, their inroad into a fertile and unguarded province, the richness of their spoil, and the safety of their return, announced to their brethren the most favourable omens of victory. In the ensuing spring, five thousand veterans and volunteers were embarked under the command of Tarik, a dauntless and skilful soldier, who surpassed the expectation of his chief; and the necessary transports were provided by the industry of their too faithful ally. The Saracens landed¹⁷⁴ at the pillar or point of Europe; the corrupt and familiar appellation of Gibraltar (*Gebel al Tarik*) describes the mountain of Tarik; and the intrenchments of his camp were the first outline of those fortifications, which, in the hands of our countrymen, have resisted the art and power of the house of Bourbon. The adjacent governors informed the court of Toledo of the descent and progress of the Arabs; and the defeat of his lieutenant Edeco, who had been commanded to seize and bind the presumptuous strangers, admonished Roderic of the magnitude of the danger. At the royal summons, the dukes and counts, the bishops and nobles of the Gothic monarchy, assembled at the head of their followers; and the title of king of the Romans, which is employed by an Arabic historian, may be excused

Their second
descent,
A. D. 711,
April;

CHAP.
LI.

and victory,
July 19—26.

by the close affinity of language, religion, and manners, between the nations of Spain. His army consisted of ninety or an hundred thousand men; a formidable power, if their fidelity and discipline had been adequate to their numbers. The troops of Tarik had been augmented to twelve thousand Saracens; but the Christian malecontents were attracted by the influence of Julian, and a crowd of Africans most greedily tasted the temporal blessings of the Koran. In the neighbourhood of Cadiz, the town of Xeres¹⁷ has been illustrated by the encounter which determined the fate of the kingdom; the stream of the Guadalete; which falls into the bay, divided the two camps, and marked the advancing and retreating skirmishes of three successive and bloody days. On the fourth day, the two armies joined a more serious and decisive issue; but Alaric would have blushed at the sight of his unworthy successor, sustaining on his head a diadem of pearls, incumbered with a flowing robe of gold and silken embroidery, and reclining on a litter or car of ivory drawn by two white mules. Notwithstanding the valour of the Saracens, they fainted under the weight of multitudes, and the plain of Xeres was overspread with sixteen thousand of their dead bodies. "My brethren," said Tarik to his surviving companions, "the enemy is before you, the sea is behind; whither would ye fly? Follow your general: I am resolved either to lose my life, or to trample on the prostrate king of the Romans." Besides the resource of despair, he

confided in the secret correspondence and nocturnal interviews of count Julian, with the sons and the brother of Witiza. The two princes and the archbishop of Toledo, occupied the most important post: their well-timed defection broke the ranks of the Christians; each warrior was prompted by fear or suspicion to consult his personal safety; and the remains of the Gothic army were scattered or destroyed in the flight and pursuit of the three following days. Amidst the general disorder, Roderic started from his car, and mounted Orelia, the fleetest of his horses; but he escaped from a soldier's death to perish more ignobly in the waters of the Bætis or Guadalquivir. His diadem, his robes, and his courser, were found on the bank; but as the body of the Gothic prince was lost in the waves, the pride and ignorance of the caliph must have been gratified with some meaner head, which was exposed in triumph before the palace of Damascus. "And such," continues a valiant historian of the Arabs, "is the fate of those kings who withdraw themselves from a field of battle."¹⁷⁶

Count Julian had plunged so deep into guilt and infamy, that his only hope was in the ruin of his country. After the battle of Xeres he recommended the most effectual measures to the victorious Saracen. "The king of the Goths is slain; their princes have fled before you, the army is routed, the nation is astonished. Secure with sufficient detachments the cities of Bætica; but in person, and without delay, march to the

C H A P.
LI.

Ruin of the
Gothic mo-
narchy,
A. D. 711.

CHAP. " royal city of Toledo, and allow not the distracted
 LI. " Christians either time or tranquillity for the
 " election of a new monarch." Tarik listened to
 his advice. A Roman captive and profelyte, who
 had been enfranchised by the caliph himself,
 assaulted Cordova with seven hundred horse: he
 swam the river, surpris'd the town, and drove
 the Christians into the great church, where they
 defended themselves above three months. Another
 detachment reduced the sea-coast of Bœtica; which
 in the last period of the Moorish power has com-
 prised in a narrow space the populous kingdom
 of Grenada. The march of Tarik from the Bœtis
 to the Tagus ¹⁷⁷, was directed through the Sierra
 Morena, that separates Andalusia and Castille, till
 he appeared in arms under the walls of Toledo ¹⁷⁸.
 The most zealous of the Catholics had escaped
 with the relics of their saints; and if the gates
 were shut, it was only till the victor had subscribed
 a fair and reasonable capitulation. The voluntary
 exiles were allowed to depart with their effects;
 seven churches were appropriated to the Christian
 worship; the archbishop and his clergy were at
 liberty to exercise their functions, the monks to
 practise or neglect their penance; and the Goths
 and Romans were left in all civil and criminal
 cases to the subordinate jurisdiction of their own
 laws and magistrates. But if the justice of Tarik
 protected the Christians, his gratitude and policy
 rewarded the Jews, to whose secret or open aid
 he was indebted for his most important acquisitions.
 Persecuted by the kings and synods of Spain, who

had often pressed the alternative of banishment or baptism, that outcast nation embraced the moment of revenge: the comparison of their past and present state was the pledge of their fidelity; and the alliance between the disciples of Moses and of Mahomet, was maintained till the final æra of their common expulsion. From the royal seat of Toledo, the Arabian leader spread his conquests to the north, over the modern realms of Castille and Leon; but it is needless to enumerate the cities that yielded on his approach, or again to describe the table of emerald¹⁷⁹, transported from the East by the Romans, acquired by the Goths among the spoils of Rome, and presented by the Arabs to the throne of Damascus. Beyond the Asturian mountains, the maritime town of Gijon was the term¹⁸⁰ of the lieutenant of Musa, who had performed, with the speed of a traveller, his victorious march, of seven hundred miles, from the rock of Gibraltar to the bay of Biscay. The failure of land compelled him to retreat; and he was recalled to Toledo, to excuse his presumption of subduing a kingdom in the absence of his general. Spain, which, in a more savage and disorderly state, had resisted, two hundred years, the arms of the Romans, was overrun in a few months by those of the Saracens; and such was the eagerness of submission and treaty, that the governor of Cordova is recorded as the only chief who fell, without conditions, a prisoner into their hands. The cause of the Goths had been irrevocably judged in the field of Xeres; and, in the

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LI.

national dismay, each part of the monarchy declined a contest with the antagonist who had vanquished the united strength of the whole¹⁸¹. That strength had been wasted by two successive seasons of famine and pestilence; and the governors, who were impatient to surrender, might exaggerate the difficulty of collecting the provisions of a siege. To disarm the Christians, superstition likewise contributed her terrors: and the subtle Arab encouraged the report of dreams omens, and prophecies, and of the portraits of the destined conquerors of Spain, that were discovered on breaking open an apartment of the royal palace. Yet a spark of the vital flame was still alive: some invincible fugitives preferred a life of poverty and freedom in the Asturian vallies; the hardy mountaineers repulsed the slaves of the caliph; and the sword of Pelagius has been transformed into the sceptre of the Catholic kings¹⁸².

Conquest of
Spain by
Musa,
A. D.
712, 713.

On the intelligence of this rapid success, the applause of Musa degenerated into envy; and he began, not to complain, but to fear, that Tarik would leave him nothing to subdue. At the head of ten thousand Arabs and eight thousand Africans, he passed over in person from Mauritania to Spain: the first of his companions were the noblest of the Koreish; his eldest son was left in the command of Africa; the three younger brethren were of an age and spirit to second the boldest enterprises of their father. At his landing in Algezire, he was respectfully entertained by
count

count Julian, who stifled his inward remorse, and testified, both in words and actions, that the victory of the Arabs had not impaired his attachment to their cause. Some enemies yet remained for the sword of Musa. The tardy repentance of the Goths had compared their own numbers and those of the invaders; the cities from which the march of Tarik had declined, considered themselves as impregnable; and the bravest patriots defended the fortifications of Seville and Merida. They were successively besieged and reduced by the labour of Musa, who transported his camp from the Bœtis to the Anas, from the Guadalquivir to the Guadiana. When he beheld the works of Roman magnificence, the bridge, the aqueducts, the triumphal arches, and the theatre, of the ancient metropolis of Lusitania, “I should imagine,” said he to his four companions, “that the human race must have united their art and power in the foundation of this city: happy is the man who shall become its master!” He aspired to that happiness, but the *Emeritans* sustained on this occasion the honour of their descent from the veteran legionaries of Augustus¹⁸³. Disdaining the confinement of their walls, they gave battle to the Arabs on the plain; but an ambuscade rising from the shelter of a quarry, or a ruin, chastised their indiscretion and intercepted their return. The wooden turrets of assault were rolled forwards to the foot of the rampart; but the defence of Merida was obstinate and long; and the *castle of the martyrs* was a

C H A P. perpetual testimony of the losses of the Moslems.
 LI. The constancy of the besieged was at length subdued by famine and despair; and the prudent victor disguised his impatience under the names of clemency and esteem. The alternative of exile or tribute was allowed; the churches were divided between the two religions; and the wealth of those who had fallen in the siege, or retired to Galicia, was confiscated as the reward of the faithful. In the midway between Merida and Toledo, the lieutenant of Musa saluted the vicerent of the caliph, and conducted him to the palace of the Gothic kings. Their first interview was cold and formal: a rigid account was exacted of the treasures of Spain: the character of Tarik was exposed to suspicion and obloquy; and the hero was imprisoned, reviled, and ignominiously scourged by the hand, or the command, of Musa. Yet so strict was the discipline, so pure the zeal, or so tame the spirit, of the primitive Moslems, that, after this public indignity, Tarik could serve and be trusted in the reduction of the Tarragonefe province. A mosch was erected at Saragossa, by the liberality of the Koreish: the port of Barcelona was opened to the vessels of Syria; and the Goths were pursued beyond the Pyrenean mountains into their Gallic province of Septimania or Languedoc¹⁸⁴. In the church of St. Mary at Carcassone, Musa found, but it is improbable that he left, seven equestrian statues of massy silver; and from his *term* or column of Narbonne, he returned on his footsteps to the Gallician and Lusitanian shores.

of the ocean. During the absence of the father, his son Abdelaziz chastised the insurgents of Seville, and reduced, from Malaga to Valencia, the sea-coast of the Mediterranean: his original treaty with the discreet and valiant Theodemir ¹⁸⁵ will represent the manners and policy of the times.

*" The conditions of peace agreed and sworn between
 " Abdelaziz; the son of Musa, the son of Nassir, and
 " Theodemir, prince of the Goths. In the name of
 " the most merciful God, Abdelaziz makes peace
 " on these conditions: that Theodemir shall not
 " be disturbed in his principality; nor any injury
 " be offered to the life or property, the wives
 " and children, the religion and temples, of the
 " Christians: that Theodemir shall freely deliver
 " his seven cities, Orihuela, Valentola, Alicant,
 " Mola, Vacafora, Bigerra (now Bejar), Ora
 " (or Opta), and Lorca: that he shall not assist or
 " entertain the enemies of the caliph, but shall
 " faithfully communicate his knowledge of their
 " hostile designs: that himself, and each of the
 " Gothic nobles, shall annually pay one piece of
 " gold, four measures of wheat, as many of
 " barley, with a certain proportion of honey,
 " oil, and vinegar; and that each of their vassals
 " shall be taxed at one moiety of the said im-
 " position. Given the fourth of Regeb, in the year
 " of the Hegira ninety-four, and subscribed with
 " the names of four Musulman witnesses ¹⁸⁶."*

Theodemir and his subjects were treated with uncommon lenity; but the rate of tribute appears to have fluctuated from a tenth to a fifth, accord-

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LI.

ing to the submission or obstinacy of the Christians¹⁸⁷. In this revolution, many partial calamities were inflicted by the carnal or religious passions of the enthusiasts: some churches were profaned by the new worship: some relics or images were confounded with idols: the rebels were put to the sword; and one town (an obscure place between Cordova and Seville) was razed to its foundations. Yet if we compare the invasion of Spain by the Goths, or its recovery by the kings of Castille and Arragon, we must applaud the moderation and discipline of the Arabian conquerors.

Disgrace of
Musa,
A. D. 714,

The exploits of Musa were performed in the evening of life, though he affected to disguise his age by colouring with a red powder the whiteness of his beard. But in the love of action and glory, his breast was still fired with the ardour of youth; and the possession of Spain was considered only as the first step to the monarchy of Europe. With a powerful armament by sea and land, he was preparing to repass the Pyrenees, to extinguish in Gaul and Italy the declining kingdoms of the Franks and Lombards, and to preach the unity of God on the altar of the Vatican. From thence, subduing the Barbarians of Germany, he proposed to follow the course of the Danube from its source to the Euxine sea, to overthrow the Greek or Roman empire of Constantinople, and returning from Europe to Asia, to unite his new acquisitions with Antioch and the provinces of Syria¹⁸⁸. But his vast enterprize, perhaps of easy execution,

must have seemed extravagant to vulgar minds; and the visionary conqueror was soon reminded of his dependence and servitude. The friends of Tarik had effectually stated his services and wrongs: at the court of Damascus, the proceedings of Musa were blamed, his intentions were suspected, and his delay in complying with the first invitation was chastised by an harsher and more peremptory summons. An intrepid messenger of the caliph entered his camp at Lugo in Gallicia, and in the presence of the Saracens and Christians arrested the bridle of his horse. His own loyalty, or that of his troops, inculcated the duty of obedience: and his disgrace was alleviated by the recal of his rival, and the permission of investing with his two governments his two sons, Abdallah and Abdelaziz. His long triumph from Ceuta to Damascus displayed the spoils of Africa and the treasures of Spain: four hundred Gothic nobles, with gold coronets and girdles, were distinguished in his train; and the number of male and female captives, selected for their birth or beauty, was computed at eighteen, or even at thirty, thousand persons. As soon as he reached Tiberias in Palestine, he was apprised of the sickness and danger of the caliph, by a private message from Soliman, his brother and presumptive heir; who wished to reserve for his own reign, the spectacle of victory. Had Walid recovered, the delay of Musa would have been criminal: he pursued his march, and found an enemy on the throne. In his trial before a partial judge, against a popular

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LI.

antagonist, he was convicted of vanity and falsehood; and a fine of two hundred thousand pieces of gold either exhausted his poverty or proved his rapaciousness. The unworthy treatment of Tarik was revenged by a similar indignity; and the veteran commander, after a public whipping, stood a whole day in the sun before the palace gate, till he obtained a decent exile, under the pious name of a pilgrimage to Mecca. The resentment of the caliph might have been satiated with the ruin of Musa; but his fears demanded the extirpation of a potent and injured family. A sentence of death was intimated with secrecy and speed to the trusty servants of the throne both in Africa and Spain; and the forms, if not the substance, of justice were superseded in this bloody execution. In the mosch or palace of Cordova, Abdelaziz was slain by the swords of the conspirators; they accused their governor of claiming the honours of royalty; and his scandalous marriage with Egilona, the widow of Roderic, offended the prejudices both of the Christians and Moslems. By a refinement of cruelty, the head of the son was presented to the father with an insulting question, whether he acknowledged the features of the rebel? "I know his features," he exclaimed with indignation: "I assert his innocence; and I imprecate the same, a juster, fate, against the authors of his death." The age and despair of Musa raised him above the power of kings; and he expired at Mecca of the anguish of a broken heart. His rival was more favourably treated: his services

were forgiven; and Tarik was permitted to mingle with the crowd of slaves¹⁸⁹. I am ignorant whether count Julian was rewarded with the death which he deserved indeed, though not from the hands of the Saracens; but the tale of their ingratitude to the sons of Witiza is disproved by the most unquestionable evidence. The two royal youths were reinstated in the private patrimony of their father; but on the decease of Eba the elder, his daughter was unjustly despoiled of her portion by the violence of her uncle Sigebut. The Gothic maid pleaded her cause before the caliph Hashem, and obtained the restitution of her inheritance; but she was given in marriage to a noble Arabian, and their two sons, Isaac and Ibrahim, were received in Spain with the consideration that was due to their origin and riches.

A province is assimilated to the victorious state by the introduction of strangers and the imitative spirit of the natives; and Spain, which had been successively tinctured with Punic, and Roman, and Gothic blood, imbibed, in a few generations, the name and manners of the Arabs. The first conquerors, and the twenty successive lieutenants of the caliphs, were attended by a numerous train of civil and military followers, who preferred a distant fortune to a narrow home: the private and public interest was promoted by the establishment of faithful colonies; and the cities of Spain were proud to commemorate the tribe or country of their Eastern progenitors. The victorious

Prosperity of
Spain under
the Arabs.

C H A P. though motley bands of Tarik and Mufa asserted,
 LI. by the name of *Spaniards*, their original claim of conquest; yet they allowed their brethren of Egypt to share their establishments of Murcia and Lisbon. The royal legion of Damascus was planted at Cordova; that of Emesa at Seville; that of Kinnisrin or Chalcis at Jaen; that of Palestine at Algezire and Medina Sidonia. The natives of Yemen and Persia were scattered round Toledo and the inland country; and the fertile seats of Grenada were bestowed on ten thousand horsemen of Syria and Irak, the children of the purest and most noble of the Arabian tribes¹⁹⁰. A spirit of emulation, sometimes beneficial, more frequently dangerous, was nourished by these hereditary factions. Ten years after the conquest, a map of the province was presented to the caliph: the seas, the rivers, and the harbours, the inhabitants and cities, the climate, the soil, and the mineral productions of the earth¹⁹¹. In the space of two centuries, the gifts of nature were improved by the agriculture¹⁹², the manufactures, and the commerce of an industrious people; and the effects of their diligence have been magnified by the idleness of their fancy. The first of the Omniades who reigned in Spain solicited the support of the Christians; and, in his edict of peace and protection, he contents himself with a modest imposition of ten thousand ounces of gold, ten thousand pounds of silver, ten thousand horses, as many mules, one thousand cuirasses, with an equal number of helmets and lances¹⁹³.

The most powerful of his successors derived from the same kingdom the annual tribute of twelve millions and forty-five thousand dinars or pieces of gold, about six millions of sterling money ¹⁹⁴; a sum which, in the tenth century, most probably surpassed the united revenues of the Christian monarchs. His royal seat of Cordova contained six hundred moschs, nine hundred baths, and two hundred thousand houses: he gave laws to eighty cities of the first, to three hundred of the second and third order; and the fertile banks of the Guadalquivir were adorned with twelve thousand villages and hamlets. The Arabs might exaggerate the truth, but they created and they describe the most prosperous æra of the riches, the cultivation, and the populousness of Spain ¹⁹⁵.

The wars of the Moslems were sanctified by the prophet, but, among the various precepts and examples of his life, the caliphs selected the lessons of toleration that might tend to disarm the resistance of the unbelievers. Arabia was the temple and patrimony of the God of Mahomet; but he beheld with less jealousy and affection the nations of the earth. The polytheists and idolaters who were ignorant of his name, might be lawfully extirpated by his votaries ¹⁹⁶; but a wise policy supplied the obligation of justice; and after some acts of intolerant zeal, the Mahometan conquerors of Hindostan have spared the pagods of that devout and populous country. The disciples of Abraham, of Moses, and of Jesus, were solemnly invited to accept the more *perfect* revelation of

C H A P.

LI.

Religious
toleration.

CHAP. Mahomet; but if they preferred the payment of
 LI. a moderate tribute, they were entitled to the
 freedom of conscience and religious worship¹⁹⁷.

Propagation
 of Mahomet,
 ism.

In a field of battle, the forfeit lives of the prisoners were redeemed by the profession of *Islam*; the females were bound to embrace the religion of their masters, and a race of sincere profelytes was gradually multiplied by the education of the infant captives. But the millions of African and Asiatic converts, who swelled the native band of the faithful Arabs, must have been allured, rather than constrained, to declare their belief in one God and the apostle of God. By the repetition of a sentence and the loss of a foreskin, the subject or the slave, the captive or the criminal, arose in a moment the free and equal companion of the victorious Moslems. Every sin was expiated, every engagement was dissolved: the vow of celibacy was superseded by the indulgence of nature; the active spirits who slept in the cloister were awakened by the trumpet of the Saracens; and in the convulsion of the world, every member of a new society ascended to the natural level of his capacity and courage. The minds of the multitude were tempted by the invisible as well as temporal blessings of the Arabian prophet; and charity will hope that many of his profelytes entertained a serious conviction of the truth and sanctity of his revelation. In the eyes of an inquisitive polytheist, it must appear worthy of the human and the divine nature. More pure than the system of Zoroaster, more liberal than the law of Moses, the religion of

Mahomet might seem less inconsistent with reason, than the creed of mystery and superstition, which, in the seventh century, disgraced the simplicity of the gospel.

In the extensive provinces of Persia and Africa, the national religion has been eradicated by the Mahometan faith. The ambiguous theology of the Magi stood alone among the sects of the East: but the profane writings of Zoroaster¹⁹⁸ might, under the reverend name of Abraham, be dextrously connected with the chain of divine revelation. Their evil principle, the dæmon Ahriman, might be represented as the rival or as the creature of the God of light. The temples of Persia were devoid of images; but the worship of the sun and of fire might be stigmatized as a gross and criminal idolatry¹⁹⁹. The milder sentiment was consecrated by the practice of²⁰⁰ Mahomet and the prudence of the caliphs; the Magians or Ghebers were ranked with the Jews and Christians among the people of the written law²⁰¹; and as late as the third century of the Hegira, the city of Herat will afford a lively contrast of private zeal and public toleration²⁰². Under the payment of an annual tribute, the Mahometan law secured to the Ghebers of Herat, their civil and religious liberties: but the recent and humble mosch was overshadowed by the antique splendour of the adjoining temple of fire. A fanatic Imam deplored, in his sermons, the scandalous neighbourhood, and accused the weakness or indifference of the faithful. Excited

Fall of the
Magians of
Persia.

CHAP.

LI.

by his voice, the people assembled in tumult; the two houses of prayer were consumed by the flames, but the vacant ground was immediately occupied by the foundations of a new mosque. The injured Magi appealed to the sovereign of Chorasan; he promised justice and relief; when, behold! four thousand citizens of Herat, of a grave character and mature age, unanimously swore that the idolatrous fane had *never* existed; the inquisition was silenced, and their conscience was satisfied (says the historian Mirchond) ²⁰³ with this holy and meritorious perjury ²⁰⁴. But the greatest part of the temples of Persia were ruined by the insensible and general desertion of their votaries. It was *insensible*, since it is not accompanied with any memorial of time or place, of persecution or resistance. It was *general*, since the whole realm, from Shiraz to Samarcand, imbibed the faith of the Koran; and the preservation of the native tongue reveals the descent of the Mahometans of Persia ²⁰⁵. In the mountains and deserts, an obstinate race of unbelievers adhered to the superstition of their fathers; and a faint tradition of the Magian theology is kept alive in the province of Kirman, along the banks of the Indus, among the exiles of Surat, and in the colony which, in the last century, was planted by Shaw Abbas at the gates of Ispahan. The chief pontiff has retired to mount Elbourz, eighteen leagues from the city of Yezd: the perpetual fire (if it continue to burn) is inacces-

sible to the profane; but his residence is the school, the oracle, and the pilgrimage, of the Ghebers, whose hard and uniform features attest the unmingled purity of their blood. Under the jurisdiction of their elders, eighty thousand families maintain an innocent and industrious life; their subsistence is derived from some curious manufactures and mechanic trades; and they cultivate the earth with the fervour of a religious duty. Their ignorance withstood the despotism of Shaw Abbas, who demanded with threats and tortures the prophetic books of Zoroaster; and this obscure remnant of the Magians is spared by the moderation or contempt of their present sovereigns ²⁰⁶.

The northern coast of Africa is the only land in which the light of the Gospel, after a long and perfect establishment, has been totally extinguished. The arts, which had been taught by Carthage and Rome, were involved in a cloud of ignorance; the doctrine of Cyprian and Augustin was no longer studied. Five hundred episcopal churches were overturned by the hostile fury of the Donatists, the Vandals, and the Moors. The zeal and numbers of the clergy declined; and the people, without discipline, or knowledge, or hope, submissively sunk under the yoke of the Arabian prophet. Within fifty years after the expulsion of the Greeks, a lieutenant of Africa informed the caliph that the tribute of the infidels was abolished by their conversion ²⁰⁷; and, though he sought to

Decline and
fall of Chris-
tianity in
Africa,

A. D. 749.

C H A P.

LI.

A. D. 837.

disguise his fraud and rebellion, his specious pretence was drawn from the rapid and extensive progress of the Mahometan faith. In the next age, an extraordinary mission of five bishops was detached from Alexandria to Cairoan. They were ordained by the Jacobite patriarch to cherish and revive the dying embers of Christianity²⁰⁸: but the interposition of a foreign prelate, a stranger to the Latins, an enemy to the Catholics, supposes the decay and dissolution of the African hierarchy. It was no longer the time when the successor of St. Cyprian, at the head of a numerous synod, could maintain an equal contest with the ambition of the Roman pontiff.

A. D.

1053—1076.

In the eleventh century, the unfortunate priest who was seated on the ruins of Carthage, implored the alms and the protection of the Vatican; and he bitterly complains that his naked body had been scourged by the Saracens, and that his authority was disputed by the four suffragans, the tottering pillars of his throne. Two epistles of Gregory the seventh²⁰⁹ are destined to soothe the distress of the Catholics and the pride of a Moorish prince. The pope assures the sultan that they both worship the same God, and may hope to meet in the bosom of Abraham; but the complaint, that three bishops could no longer be found to consecrate a brother, announces the speedy and inevitable ruin of the episcopal order.

and Spain,

A. D. 1149,
&c.

The Christians of Africa and Spain had long since submitted to the practice of circumcision and the legal abstinence from wine and pork;

and the name of *Mozarabes*²¹⁰ (adoptive Arabs) was applied to their civil or religious conformity²¹¹. About the middle of the twelfth century the worship of Christ and the succession of pastors were abolished along the coast of Barbary, and in the kingdoms of Cordova and Seville, of Valencia and Grenada²¹². The throne of the Almohades, or Unitarians, was founded on the blindest fanaticism, and their extraordinary rigour might be provoked or justified by the recent victories and intolerant zeal of the princes of Sicily and Castille, of Arragon and Portugal. The faith of the Mozarabes was occasionally revived by the papal missionaries; and, on the landing of Charles the fifth, some families of Latin Christians were encouraged to rear their heads at Tunis and Algiers. But the seed of the gospel was quickly eradicated, and the long province from Tripoli to the Atlantic has lost all memory of the language and religion of Rome²¹³. C H A P.
LI.

After the revolution of eleven centuries, the Jews and Christians of the Turkish empire enjoy the liberty of conscience which was granted by the Arabian caliphs. During the first age of the conquest, they suspected the loyalty of the Catholics, whose name of Melchites betrayed their secret attachment to the Greek emperor, while the Nestorians and Jacobites, his inveterate enemies, approved themselves the sincere and voluntary friends of the Mahometan government²¹⁴. Yet this partial jealousy was healed by time and Toleration of
the Christi-
ans.

CHAP. submission: the churches of Egypt were shared
 LI. with the Catholics²¹⁵; and all the Oriental sects
 were included in the common benefits of tolera-
 tion. The rank, the immunities, the domestic
 jurisdiction, of the patriarchs, the bishops, and
 the clergy, were protected by the civil magis-
 trate: the learning of individuals recommended
 them to the employments of secretaries and phy-
 sicians: they were enriched by the lucrative col-
 lection of the revenue; and their merit was
 sometimes raised to the command of cities and
 provinces. A caliph of the house of Abbas was
 heard to declare that the Christians were most
 worthy of trust in the administration of Persia.
 "The Moslems," said he, "will abuse their
 present fortune; the Magians regret their fallen
 greatness; and the Jews are impatient for their
 approaching deliverance²¹⁷." But the slaves
 of despotism are exposed to the alternatives of
 favour and disgrace. The captive churches of
 the East have been afflicted in every age by the
 avarice or bigotry of their rulers; and the or-
 dinary and legal restraints must be offensive to
 the pride or the zeal of the Christians²¹⁷. About
 two hundred years after Mahomet, they were
 separated from their fellow-subjects by a turban
 or girdle of a less honourable colour; instead of
 horses or mules, they were condemned to ride
 on asses, in the attitude of women. Their public
 and private buildings were measured by a dimi-
 nutive standard; in the streets or the baths it is
 their duty to give way or bow down before the
 meanest

Their hard-
 ships.

meanest of the people; and their testimony is rejected, if it may tend to the prejudice of a true believer. The pomp of processions, the sound of bells or of psalmody, is interdicted in their worship: a decent reverence for the national faith is imposed on their sermons and conversations; and the sacrilegious attempt to enter a mosch, or to seduce a Musulman, will not be suffered to escape with impunity. In a time however of tranquillity and justice the Christians have never been compelled to renounce the Gospel or to embrace the Koran; but the punishment of death is inflicted for the apostates who have professed and deserted the law of Mahomet. The martyrs of Cordova provoked the sentence of the cadhi, by the public confession of their inconstancy, or their passionate invectives against the person and religion of the prophet²¹⁸.

At the end of the first century of the Hegira, the caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe. Their prerogative was not circumscribed, either in right or in fact, by the power of the nobles, the freedom of the commons, the privileges of the church, the votes of a senate, or the memory of a free constitution. The authority of the companions of Mahomet expired with their lives; and the chiefs or emirs of the Arabian tribes left behind, in the desert, the spirit of equality and independence. The regal and sacerdotal characters were united in the successors of Mahomet; and if the Koran

The empire
of the ca-
liphs,
A. D. 712,

CHAP.
LI.

was the rule of their actions, they were the supreme judges and interpreters of that divine book. They reigned by the right of conquest over the nations of the East, to whom the name of liberty was unknown, and who were accustomed to applaud in their tyrants the acts of violence and severity that were exercised at their own expence. Under the last of the Ommiades, the Arabian empire extended two hundred days journey from east to west, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic ocean. And if we retrench the sleeve of the robe, as it is styled by their writers, the long and narrow province of Africa, the solid and compact dominion from Fargana to Aden, from Tarsus to Surat, will spread on every side to the measure of four or five months of the march of a caravan²¹⁹. We should vainly seek the indissoluble union and easy obedience that pervaded the government of Augustus and the Antonines; but the progress of the Mahometan religion diffused over this ample space a general resemblance of manners and opinions. The language and laws of the Koran were studied with equal devotion at Samarcand and Seville: the Moor and the Indian embraced as countrymen and brothers in the pilgrimage of Mecca; and the Arabian language was adopted as the popular idiom in all the provinces to the westward of the Tigris²²⁰.

C H A P. LII.

The Two Sieges of Constantinople by the Arabs. — Their Invasion of France, and Defeat by Charles Martel. — Civil War of the Omniades and Abbassides. — Learning of the Arabs. — Luxury of the Caliphs. — Naval Enterprises on Crete, Sicily, and Rome. — Decay and Division of the Empire of the Caliphs. — Defeats and Victories of the Greek Emperors.

WHEN the Arabs first issued from the desert, they must have been surprised at the ease and rapidity of their own success. But when they advanced in the career of victory to the banks of the Indus and the summit of the Pyrenees; when they had repeatedly tried the edge of their scymetars and the energy of their faith, they might be equally astonished that any nation could resist their invincible arms, that any boundary should confine the dominion of the successor of the prophet. The confidence of soldiers and fanatics may indeed be excused, since the calm historian of the present hour, who strives to follow the rapid course of the Saracens, must study to explain by what means the church and state were saved from this impending, and, as it should seem, from this inevitable danger. The deserts of Scythia and Sarmatia might be guarded by their extent, their climate, their poverty, and the courage of the northern shepherds; China

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LII.

The limits
the Arabian
conquests.

C H A P. was remote and inaccessible; but the greatest
LII. part of the temperate zone was subject to the Mahometan conquerors, the Greeks were exhausted by the calamities of war and the loss of their fairest provinces, and the Barbarians of Europe might justly tremble at the precipitate fall of the Gothic monarchy. In this enquiry I shall unfold the events that rescued our ancestors of Britain, and our neighbours of Gaul from the civil and religious yoke of the Koran; that protected the majesty of Rome, and delayed the servitude of Constantinople; that invigorated the defence of the Christians, and scattered among their enemies the seeds of division and decay.

First siege of
 Constanti-
 nople by the
 Arabs,
 A. D.
 668—675.

Forty-six years after the flight of Mahomet from Mecca, his disciples appeared in arms under the walls of Constantinople¹. They were animated by a genuine or fictitious saying of the prophet, that, to the first army which besieged the city of the Cæsars, their sins were forgiven: the long series of Roman triumphs would be meritoriously transferred to the conquerors of New Rome, and the wealth of nations was deposited in this well-chosen seat of royalty and commerce. No sooner had the caliph Moawiyah suppressed his rivals and established his throne, than he aspired to expiate the guilt of civil blood, by the success and glory of this holy expedition²; his preparations by sea and land were adequate to the importance of the object; his standard was entrusted to Sophian, a veteran warrior, but

the troops were encouraged by the example and presence of Yezid the son and presumptive heir of the commander of the faithful. The Greeks had little to hope, nor had their enemies any reasons of fear, from the courage and vigilance of the reigning emperor, who disgraced the name of Constantine, and imitated only the inglorious years of his grandfather Heraclius. Without delay or opposition, the naval forces of the Saracens passed through the unguarded channel of the Hellespont, which even now, under the feeble and disorderly government of the Turks, is maintained as the natural bulwark of the capital³. The Arabian fleet cast anchor, and the troops were disembarked near the palace of Hebdomon, seven miles from the city. During many days, from the dawn of light to the evening, the line of assault was extended from the golden gate to the eastern promontory, and the foremost warriors were impelled by the weight and effort of the succeeding columns. But the besiegers had formed an insufficient estimate of the strength and resources of Constantinople. The solid and lofty walls were guarded by numbers and discipline: the spirit of the Romans was rekindled by the last danger of their religion and empire: the fugitives from the conquered provinces more successfully renewed the defence of Damascus and Alexandria; and the Saracens were dismayed by the strange and prodigious effects of artificial fire. This firm and effectual resistance diverted their arms to the more easy attempts of

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plundering the European and Asiatic coasts of the Propontis; and, after keeping the sea from the month of April to that of September, on the approach of winter they retreated fourscore miles from the capital, to the isle of Cyzicus, in which they had established their magazine of spoil and provisions. So patient was their perseverance, or so languid were their operations, that they repeated in the six following summers the same attack and retreat, with a gradual abatement of hope and vigour, till the mischances of ship wreck and disease, of the sword and of fire, compelled them to relinquish the fruitless enterprise. They might bewail the loss or commemorate the martyrdom of thirty thousand Moslems, who fell in the siege of Constantinople; and the solemn funeral of Abu Ayub, or Job, excited the curiosity of the Christians themselves. That venerable Arab, one of the last of the companions of Mahomet, was numbered among the *ansars*, or auxiliaries, of Medina, who sheltered the head of the flying prophet. In his youth he fought, at Beder and Ohud, under the holy standard: in his mature age he was the friend and follower of Ali; and the last remnant of his strength and life was consumed in a distant and dangerous war against the enemies of the Koran. His memory was revered; but the place of his burial was neglected and unknown, during a period of seven hundred and eighty years, till the conquest of Constantinople by Mahomet the second. A seasonable vision (for

such are the manufacture of every religion) revealed the holy spot at the foot of the walls and the bottom of the harbour; and the mosch of Ayub has been deservedly chosen for the simple and martial inauguration of the Turkish sultans ⁴.

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The event of the siege revived, both in the East and West, the reputation of the Roman arms, and cast a momentary shade over the glories of the Saracens. The Greek ambassador was favourably received at Damascus, in a general council of the emirs or Koreish: a peace, or truce, of thirty years was ratified between the two empires; and the stipulation of an annual tribute, fifty horses of a noble breed, fifty slaves, and three thousand pieces of gold, degraded the majesty of the commander of the faithful ⁵. The aged caliph was desirous of possessing his dominions, and ending his days in tranquillity and repose: while the Moors and Indians trembled at his name, his palace and city of Damascus was insulted by the Mardaites, or Maronites, of mount Libanus, the firmest barrier of the empire, till they were disarmed and transplanted by the suspicious policy of the Greeks ⁶. After the revolt of Arabia and Persia, the house of Ommyah ⁷ was reduced to the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt: their distress and fear enforced their compliance with the pressing demands of the Christians; and the tribute was encreased to a slave, an horse, and a thousand pieces of gold, for each of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the solar year.

Peace and
tribute,
A. D. 677.

CHAP. But as soon as the empire was again united by
 LII. the arms and policy of Abdalmalek, he disclaimed a badge of servitude not less injurious to his conscience than to his pride: he discontinued the payment of the tribute; and the resentment of the Greeks was disabled from action by the mad tyranny of the second Justinian, the just rebellion of his subjects, and the frequent change of his antagonists and successors. Till the reign of Abdalmalek, the Saracens had been content with the free possession of the Persian and Roman treasures, in the coin of Chosroes and Cæsar. By the command of that Caliph, a national mint was established, both for silver and gold, and the inscription of the Dinar, though it might be censured by some timorous casuists, proclaimed the unity of the God of Mahomet^s. Under the reign of the caliph Waled, the Greek language and characters were excluded from the accounts of the public revenue^s. If this change was productive of the invention or familiar use of our present numerals, the Arabic or Indian cyphers, as they are commonly styled, a regulation of office has promoted the most important discoveries of arithmetic, algebra, and the mathematical sciences¹⁰.

Second siege
 of Constanti-
 nople,

A. D.

716—718.

Whilst the caliph Waled sat idle on the throne of Damascus, while his lieutenants atchieved the conquest of Tranfoxiana and Spain, a third army of Saracens overspread the provinces of Asia Minor, and approached the borders of the Byzantine capital. But the attempt and disgrace of

the second siege was reserved for his brother Soliman, whose ambition appears to have been quickened by a more active and martial spirit. In the revolutions of the Greek empire, after the tyrant Justinian had been punished and avenged, an humble secretary, Anastasius or Artemius, was promoted by chance or merit to the vacant purple. He was alarmed by the sound of war; and his ambassador returned from Damascus with the tremendous news, that the Saracens were preparing an armament by sea and land, such as would transcend the experience of the past, or the belief of the present, age. The precautions of Anastasius were not unworthy of his station, or of the impending danger. He issued a peremptory mandate, that all persons who were not provided with the means of subsistence for a three years siege, should evacuate the city: the public granaries and arsenals were abundantly replenished; the walls were restored and strengthened; and the engines for casting stones, or darts, or fire, were stationed along the ramparts, or in the brigantines of war, of which an additional number was hastily constructed. To prevent, is safer, as well as more honourable, than to repel, an attack; and a design was meditated, above the usual spirit of the Greeks, of burning the naval stores of the enemy, the cypress timber that had been hewn on mount Libanus, and was piled along the sea-shore of Phœnicia, for the service of the Egyptian fleet. This generous enterprise was defeated by the cowardice or treachery of

C H A P. the troops, who, in the new language of the em-
 LII. pire, were styled of the *Obsequian Theme*¹¹. They
 murdered their chief, deserted their standard in the
 isle of Rhodes, dispersed themselves over the ad-
 jacent continent, and deserved pardon or reward by
 investing with the purple a simple officer of the
 revenue. The name of Theodosius might recom-
 mend him to the senate and people; but, after
 some months, he sunk into a cloyster, and re-
 signed, to the firmer hand of Leo the Isaurian,
 the urgent defence of the capital and empire.
 The most formidable of the Saracens, Moslemah
 the brother of the caliph, was advancing at the
 head of one hundred and twenty thousand Arabs
 and Persians, the greater part mounted on horses
 or camels; and the successful sieges of Tyana,
 Amorium, and Pergamus, were of sufficient du-
 ration to exercise their skill and to elevate their
 hopes. At the well-known passage of Abydus,
 on the Hellespont, the Mahometan arms were
 transported, for the first time, from Asia to Eu-
 rope. From thence, wheeling round the Thra-
 cian cities of the Propontis, Moslemah invested
 Constantinople on the land side, surrounded his
 camp with a ditch and rampart, prepared and
 planted his engines of assault, and declared, by
 words and actions, a patient resolution of expect-
 ing the return of seed-time and harvest, should
 the obstinacy of the besieged prove equal to his
 own. The Greeks would gladly have ransomed
 their religion and empire, by a fine or assessment
 of a piece of gold on the head of each inhabitant

of the city; but the liberal offer was rejected with disdain, and the presumption of Moslemah was exalted by the speedy approach and invincible force of the navies of Egypt and Syria. They are said to have amounted to eighteen hundred ships: the number betrays their inconsiderable size; and of the twenty stout and capacious vessels, whose magnitude impeded their progress, each was manned with no more than one hundred heavy armed soldiers. This huge Armada proceeded on a smooth sea and with a gentle gale, towards the mouth of the Bosphorus; the surface of the streight was overshadowed, in the language of the Greeks, with a moving forest, and the same fatal night had been fixed by the Saracen chief for a general assault by sea and land. To allure the confidence of the enemy, the emperor had thrown aside the chain that usually guarded the entrance of the harbour; but while they hesitated whether they should seize the opportunity, or apprehend the snare, the ministers of destruction were at hand. The fireships of the Greeks were launched against them, the Arabs, their arms, and vessels, were involved in the same flames, the disorderly fugitives were dashed against each other or overwhelmed in the waves; and I no longer find a vestige of the fleet, that had threatened to extirpate the Roman name. A still more fatal and irreparable loss was that of the caliph Soliman, who died of an indigestion¹² in his camp near Kinnisrin or Chalcis in Syria, as he was

CHAP. preparing to lead against Constantinople the re-
LII. maining forces of the East. The brother of Moslemah was succeeded by a kinsman and an enemy; and the throne of an active and able prince was degraded by the useless and pernicious virtues of a bigot. While he started and satisfied the scruples of a blind conscience, the siege was continued through the winter by the neglect rather than by the resolution of the caliph Omar¹³. The winter proved uncommonly rigorous: above an hundred days the ground was covered with deep snow, and the natives of the sultry climes of Egypt and Arabia lay torpid and almost lifeless in their frozen camp. They revived on the return of spring; a second effort had been made in their favour; and their distress was relieved by the arrival of two numerous fleets, laden with corn, and arms, and soldiers, the first from Alexandria, of four hundred transports and gallies; the second of three hundred and sixty vessels from the ports of Africa. But the Greek fires were again kindled, and if the destruction was less complete, it was owing to the experience which had taught the Moslems to remain at a safe distance, or to the perfidy of the Egyptian mariners, who deserted with their ships to the emperor of the Christians. The trade and navigation of the capital were restored; and the produce of the fisheries supplied the wants, and even the luxury, of the inhabitants. But the calamities of famine and disease were soon felt by the troops of Moslemah, and as the former was

miserably assuaged, so the latter was dreadfully propagated, by the pernicious nutriment which hunger compelled them to extract from the most unclean or unnatural food. The spirit of conquest, and even of enthusiasm, was extinct: the Saracens could no longer straggle beyond their lines, either single or in small parties, without exposing themselves to the merciless retaliation of the Thracian peasants. An army of Bulgarians was attracted from the Danube by the gifts and promises of Leo; and these savage auxiliaries made some atonement for the evils which they had inflicted on the empire, by the defeat and slaughter of twenty-two thousand Asiatics. A report was dextrously scattered, that the Franks, the unknown nations of the Latin world, were arming by sea and land in the defence of the Christian cause, and their formidable aid was expected with far different sensations in the camp and city. At length, after a siege of thirteen months¹⁴, the hopeless Moslemah received from the caliph the welcome permission of retreat. The march of the Arabian cavalry over the Hellespont and through the provinces of Asia, was executed without delay or molestation; but an army of their brethren had been cut in pieces on the side of Bithynia, and the remains of the fleet were so repeatedly damaged by tempest and fire, that only five gallies entered the port of Alexandria to relate the tale of their various and almost incredible disasters¹⁵.

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LII.

Failure and
retreat of the
Saracens.

In the two sieges, the deliverance of Constan-

Invention
and use of

C H A P.
LII.
the Greek
fire.

tinople may be chiefly ascribed to the novelty, the terrors, and the real efficacy of the *Greek fire*¹⁶. The important secret of compounding and directing this artificial flame was imparted by Callinicus, a native of Heliopolis in Syria, who deserted from the service of the caliph to that of the emperor¹⁷. The skill of a chymist and engineer was equivalent to the succour of fleets and armies; and this discovery or improvement of the military art was fortunately reserved for the distressful period, when the degenerate Romans of the East were incapable of contending with the warlike enthusiasm and youthful vigour of the Saracens. The historian who presumes to analyze this extraordinary composition should suspect his own ignorance and that of his Byzantine guides, so prone to the marvellous, so careless, and, in this instance, so jealous of the truth. From their obscure, and perhaps fallacious hints, it should seem that the principal ingredient of the Greek fire was the *naptha*¹⁸, or liquid bitumen, a light, tenacious, and inflammable oil¹⁹, which springs from the earth, and catches fire as soon as it comes in contact with the air. The *naptha* was mingled, I know not by what methods or in what proportions, with sulphur and with the pitch that is extracted from evergreen firs²⁰. From this mixture, which produced a thick smoke and a loud explosion, proceeded a fierce and obstinate flame, which not only rose in perpendicular ascent, but likewise burnt with equal vehemence in descent or lateral progress; instead of being extinguished, it was nourished and quickened,

by the element of water; and sand, urine, or vinegar, were the only remedies that could damp the fury of this powerful agent, which was justly denominated by the Greeks, the *liquid*, or the *maritime*, fire. For the annoyance of the enemy, it was employed with equal effect, by sea and land, in battles or in sieges. It was either poured from the rampart in large boilers, or launched in red-hot balls of stone and iron, or darted in arrows and javelins, twisted round with flax and tow, which had deeply imbibed the inflammable oil: sometimes it was deposited in fire-ships, the victims and instruments of a more ample revenge, and was most commonly blown through long tubes of copper, which were planted on the prow of a galley, and fancifully shaped into the mouths of savage monsters, that seemed to vomit a stream of liquid and consuming fire. This important art was preserved at Constantinople, as the palladium of the state: the gallies and *artillery* might occasionally be lent to the allies of Rome; but the composition of the Greek fire was concealed with the most jealous scruple, and the terror of the enemies was encreased and prolonged by their ignorance and surprize. In the treatise of the administration of the empire, the royal author²¹ suggests the answers and excuses that might best elude the indiscreet curiosity and importunate demands of the Barbarians. They should be told that the mystery of the Greek fire had been revealed by an angel to the first and greatest of the Constantines, with a sacred

- H A P. LII. injunction, that this gift of heaven, this peculiar blessing of the Romans, should never be communicated to any foreign nation: that the prince and subject were alike bound to religious silence under the temporal and spiritual penalties of treason and sacrilege; and that the impious attempt would provoke the sudden and supernatural vengeance of the God of the Christians. By these precautions, the secret was confined, above four hundred years, to the Romans of the East; and, at the end of the eleventh century, the Pisans, to whom every sea and every art were familiar, suffered the effects, without understanding the composition, of the Greek fire. It was at length either discovered or stolen by the Mahometans; and, in the holy wars of Syria and Egypt, they retorted an invention, contrived against themselves, on the heads of the Christians. A knight, who despised the swords and lances of the Saracens, relates, with heartfelt sincerity, his own fears, and those of his companions, at the sight and sound of the mischievous engine that discharged a torrent of the Greek fire, the *feu Gregeois*, as it is styled by the more early of the French writers. It came flying through the air, says Joinville²², like a winged long-tailed dragon, about the thickness of an hog'shead, with the report of thunder and the velocity of lightning; and the darkness of the night was dispelled by this deadly illumination. The use of the Greek, or, as it might now be called, of the Saracen, fire, was continued
to

to the middle of the fourteenth century ²³, when the scientific or casual compound of nitre, sulphur, and charcoal, effected a new revolution in the art of war and the history of mankind ²⁴.

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Constantinople and the Greek fire might exclude the Arabs from the eastern entrance of Europe; but in the West, on the side of the Pyrenees, the provinces of Gaul were threatened and invaded by the conquerors of Spain ²⁵. The decline of the French monarchy invited the attack of these insatiate fanatics. The descendants of Clovis had lost the inheritance of his martial and ferocious spirit; and their misfortune or demerit has affixed the epithet of *lazy* to the last kings of the Merovingian race ²⁶. They ascended the throne without power, and sunk into the grave without a name. A country palace, in the neighbourhood of Compiègne ²⁷, was allotted for their residence or prison; but each year, in the month of March or May, they were conducted in a waggon drawn by oxen to the assembly of the Franks, to give audience to foreign ambassadors, and to ratify the acts of the mayor of the palace. That domestic officer was become the minister of the nation and the master of the prince. A public employment was converted into the patrimony of a private family: the elder Pepin left a king of mature years under the guardianship of his own widow and her child; and these feeble regents were forcibly dispossessed by the most active of his bastards. A government, half savage and half corrupt, was almost dissolved;

Invasion of
France by
the Arabs,
A. D. 721,
&c.

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and the tributary dukes, the provincial counts, and the territorial lords, were tempted to despise the weakness of the monarch, and to imitate the ambition of the mayor. Among these independent chiefs, one of the boldest and most successful was Eudes, duke of Aquitain, who, in the southern provinces of Gaul, usurped the authority and even the title of king. The Goths, the Gascons, and the Franks, assembled under the standard of this Christian hero: he repelled the first invasion of the Saracens; and Zama, lieutenant of the caliph, lost his army and his life under the walls of Thoulouse. The ambition of his successors was stimulated by revenge; they repassed the Pyrenees with the means and the resolution of conquest. The advantageous situation which had recommended Narbonne²⁸ as the first Roman colony, was again chosen by the Moslems: they claimed the province of Septimania or Languedoc as a just dependence of the Spanish monarchy: the vineyards of Gascony and the city of Bourdeaux were possessed by the sovereign of Damascus and Samarcand; and the south of France, from the mouth of the Garonne to that of the Rhône, assumed the manners and religion of Arabia.

Expedition
and victories
of Abderame,
A. D. 731.

But these narrow limits were scorned by the spirit of Abdalrahman, or Abderame, who had been restored by the caliph Hashem to the wishes of the soldiers and people of Spain. That veteran and daring commander adjudged to the obedience of the prophet whatever yet remained

of France or of Europe; and prepared to execute the sentence, at the head of a formidable host, in the full confidence of surmounting all opposition either of nature or of man. His first care was to suppress a domestic rebel, who commanded the most important passes of the Pyrenees: Munuza, a Moorish chief, had accepted the alliance of the duke of Aquitain; and Eudes, from a motive of private or public interest, devoted his beauteous daughter to the embraces of the African misbeliever. But the strongest fortresses of Cerdagne were invested by a superior force; the rebel was overtaken and slain in the mountains; and his widow was sent a captive to Damascus, to gratify the desires, or more probably the vanity, of the commander of the faithful. From the Pyrenees, Abderame proceeded without delay to the passage of the Rhône and the siege of Arles. An army of Christians attempted the relief of the city: the tombs of their leaders were yet visible in the thirteenth century; and many thousands of their dead bodies were carried down the rapid stream into the Mediterranean sea. The arms of Abderame were not less successful on the side of the ocean. He passed without opposition the Garonne and Dordogne, which unite their waters in the gulf of Bourdeaux; but he found, beyond those rivers, the camp of the intrepid Eudes, who had formed a second army, and sustained a second defeat, so fatal to the Christians, that, according to their sad confession, God alone could reckon the number of the slain.

C H A P.

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The victorious Saracen overran the provinces of Aquitain, whose Gallic names are disguised, rather than lost, in the modern appellations of Perigord, Saintonge, and Poitou: his standards were planted on the walls, or at least before the gates, of Tours and of Sens; and his detachments overspread the kingdom of Burgundy as far as the well-known cities of Lyons and Besançon. The memory of these devastations, for Abderame did not spare the country or the people, was long preserved by tradition; and the invasion of France by the Moors or Mahometans, affords the ground-work of those fables, which have been so wildly disfigured in the romances of chivalry, and so elegantly adorned by the Italian muse. In the decline of society and art, the deserted cities could supply a slender booty to the Saracens; their richest spoil was found in the churches and monasteries, which they stripped of their ornaments and delivered to the flames: and the tutelar saints, both Hilary of Poitiers and Martin of Tours, forgot their miraculous powers in the defence of their own sepulchres²⁹. A victorious line of march had been prolonged above a thousand miles from the rock of Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the Highlands of Scotland: the Rhine is not more impassable than the Nile or Euphrates, and the Arabian fleet might have sailed without a naval combat into the mouth of the Thames.

Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet ³.

C H A P.
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From such calamities was Christendom delivered by the genius and fortune of one man. Charles, the illegitimate son of the elder Pepin, was content with the titles of mayor or duke of the Franks, but he deserved to become the father of a line of kings. In a laborious administration of twenty-four years, he restored and supported the dignity of the throne, and the rebels of Germany and Gaul were successively crushed by the activity of a warrior, who, in the same campaign, could display his banner on the Elbe, the Rhône, and the shores of the ocean. In the public danger, he was summoned by the voice of his country; and his rival, the duke of Aquitain, was reduced to appear among the fugitives and suppliants. "Alas!" exclaimed the Franks, "what a misfortune! what an indignity! We have long heard of the name and conquests of the Arabs: we were apprehensive of their attack from the East; they have now conquered Spain, and invade our country on the side of the West. Yet their numbers, and (since they have no buckler) their arms, are inferior to our own." "If you follow my advice," replied the prudent mayor of the palace, "you will not interrupt their march, nor precipitate your attack. They are like a torrent, which it is dangerous to

Defeat of the
Saracens by
Charles Mar-
tel,
A. D 732.

C H A P.

LII.

“ stem in its career. The thirst of riches, and the
 “ consciousness of success, redouble their valour,
 “ and valour is of more avail than arms or num-
 “ bers. Be patient till they have loaded themselves
 “ with the incumbrance of wealth. The possession
 “ of wealth will divide their counsels and assure
 “ your victory.” This subtle policy is perhaps
 a refinement of the Arabian writers; and the
 situation of Charles will suggest a more narrow
 and selfish motive of procrastination; the secret
 desire of humbling the pride, and wasting the
 provinces, of the rebel duke of Aquitain. It is
 yet more probable, that the delays of Charles
 were inevitable and reluctant. A standing army
 was unknown under the first and second race:
 more than half the kingdom was now in the hands
 of the Saracens: according to their respective
 situation, the Franks of Neustria and Austrasia
 were too conscious or too careless of the impend-
 ing danger; and the voluntary aids of the Gepidæ
 and Germans were separated by a long interval
 from the standard of the Christian general. No
 sooner had he collected his forces, than he fought
 and found the enemy in the centre of France,
 between Tours and Poitiers. His well-conducted
 march was covered by a range of hills, and
 Abderame appears to have been surprised by his
 unexpected presence. The nations of Asia, Africa,
 and Europe, advanced with equal ardour to an
 encounter which would change the history of the
 world. In the six first days of desultory combat,
 the horsemen and archers of the East maintained

their advantage: but in the cloſer onſet of the ſeventh day, the Orientals were oppreſſed by the ſtrength and ſtature of the Germans, who, with ſtout hearts and *iron hands*³¹, aſſerted the civil and religious freedom of their poſterity. The epithet of *Martel*, the *Hammer*, which has been added to the name of Charles, is expreſſive of his weighty and irrefiſtible ſtrokes: the valour of Eudes was excited by reſentment and emulation; and their companions, in the eye of hiſtory, are the true Peers and Paladins of French chivalry. After a bloody field, in which Abderame was ſlain, the Saracens, in the cloſe of the evening, retired to their camp. In the diſorder and deſpair of the night, the various tribes of Yemen and Damafcus, of Africa and Spain, were provoked to turn their arms againſt each other: the remains of their hoſt were ſuddenly diſſolved, and each *emir* conſulted his ſafety by an haſty and ſeparate retreat. At the dawn of day, the ſtillneſs of an hoſtile camp was ſuſpected by the victorious Chriſtians: on the report of their ſpies, they ventured to explore the riches of the vacant tents; but, if we except ſome celebrated relics, a ſmall portion of the ſpoil was reſtored to the innocent and lawful owners. The joyful tidings were ſoon diffuſed over the Catholic world, and the monks of Italy could affirm and believe that three hundred and fifty, or three hundred and ſeventy-five thouſand of the Mahometans had been cruſhed by the hammer of Charles³²; while no more than fifteen hundred Chriſtians were ſlain in the field

CHAP.
LII.

They retreat
before the
Franks.

of Tours. But this incredible tale is sufficiently disproved by the caution of the French general, who apprehended the snares and accidents of a pursuit, and dismissed his German allies to their native forests. The inactivity of a conqueror betrays the loss of strength and blood, and the most cruel execution is inflicted, not in the ranks of battle, but on the backs of a flying enemy. Yet the victory of the Franks was complete and final; Aquitain was recovered by the arms of Eudes; the Arabs never resumed the conquest of Gaul, and they were soon driven beyond the Pyrenees by Charles Martel and his valiant race³³. It might have been expected that the favour of Christendom would have been canonized, or at least applauded, by the gratitude of the clergy, who are indebted to his sword for their present existence. But in the public distress, the mayor of the palace had been compelled to apply the riches, or at least the revenues, of the bishops and abbots, to the relief of the state and the reward of the soldiers. His merits were forgotten, his sacrilege alone was remembered, and, in an epistle to a Carlovingian prince, a Gallic synod presumes to declare that his ancestor was damned; that on the opening of his tomb, the spectators were affrighted by a smell of fire and the aspect of an horrid dragon; and that a saint of the times was indulged with a pleasant vision of the soul and body of Charles Martel, burning, to all eternity, in the abyss of hell³⁴.

Elevation of

The loss of an army, or a province, in the

Western world, was less painful to the court of Damascus than the rise and progress of a domestic competitor. Except among the Syrians, the caliphs of the house of Ommyyah had never been the objects of the public favour. The life of Mahomet recorded their perseverance in idolatry and rebellion: their conversion had been reluctant, their elevation irregular and factious, and their throne was cemented with the most holy and noble blood of Arabia. The best of their race, the pious Omar, was dissatisfied with his own title: their personal virtues were insufficient to justify a departure from the order of succession; and the eyes and wishes of the faithful were turned towards the line of Hashem and the kindred of the apostle of God. Of these the Fatimites were either rash or pusillanimous; but the descendants of Abbas cherished, with courage and discretion, the hopes of their rising fortunes. From an obscure residence in Syria, they secretly dispatched their agents and missionaries, who preached in the Eastern provinces their hereditary indefeasible right; and Mohammed, the son of Ali, the son of Abdallah, the son of Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, gave audience to the deputies of Chorasán, and accepted their free gift of four hundred thousand pieces of gold. After the death of Mohammed, the oath of allegiance was administered in the name of his son Ibrahim to a numerous band of votaries, who expected [only a signal and a leader; and the governor of Chorasán continued to deplore his fruitless admonitions and

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sides,

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the deadly slumber of the caliphs of Damascus, till he himself with all his adherents was driven from the city and palace of Meru, by the rebellious arms of Abu Moslem³⁵. That maker of kings, the author, as he is named, of the *call* of the Abbassides, was at length rewarded for his presumption of merit with the usual gratitude of courts. A mean, perhaps a foreign, extraction could not repress the aspiring energy of Abu Moslem. Jealous of his wives, liberal of his wealth, prodigal of his own blood and of that of others, he could boast with pleasure, and possibly with truth, that he had destroyed six hundred thousand of his enemies; and such was the intrepid gravity of his mind and countenance, that he was never seen to smile except on a day of battle. In the visible separation of parties the *green* was consecrated to the Fatimites; the Om-miades were distinguished by the *white*, and the *black*, as the most adverse, was naturally adopted by the Abbassides. Their turbans and garments were stained with that gloomy colour: two black standards, on pike-staves nine cubits long, were borne aloft in the van of Abu Moslem; and their allegorical names of the *night* and the *shadow* obscurely represented the indissoluble union and perpetual succession of the line of Hashem. From the Indus to the Euphrates the East was convulsed by the quarrel of the white and the black factions: the Abbassides were most frequently victorious; but their public success was clouded by the personal misfortune of their chief. The court of

Damascus, awakening, from a long slumber, resolved to prevent the pilgrimage of Mecca, which Ibrahim had undertaken with a splendid retinue, to recommend himself at once to the favour of the prophet and of the people. A detachment of cavalry intercepted his march and arrested his person; and the unhappy Ibrahim, snatched away from the promise of untasted royalty, expired in iron fetters in the dungeons of Haran. His two younger brothers, Saffah and Almanzor, eluded the search of the tyrant, and lay concealed at Cufa, till the zeal of the people and the approach of his eastern friends allowed them to expose their persons to the impatient public. On Friday, in the dress of a caliph, in the colours of the sect, Saffah proceeded with religious and military pomp to the mosch: ascending the pulpit, he prayed and preached as the lawful successor of Mahomet; and, after his departure, his kinsmen bound a willing people by an oath of fidelity. But it was on the banks of the Zab, and not in the mosch of Cufa, that this important controversy was determined. Every advantage appeared to be on the side of the white faction: the authority of established government; an army of an hundred and twenty thousand soldiers, against a sixth part of that number; and the presence and merit of the caliph Mervan, the fourteenth and last of the house of Ommyyah. Before his accession to the throne, he had deserved, by his Georgian warfare, the honourable epithet of the *ass* of Mesopotamia³⁶; and he might have been ranked among

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the greatest princes, had not, says Abulfeda, the eternal order decreed that moment for the ruin of his family; a decree against which all human prudence and fortitude must struggle in vain. The orders of Mervan were mistaken or disobeyed: the return of his horse, from which he had dismounted on a necessary occasion, impressed the belief of his death; and the enthusiasm of the black squadrons was ably conducted by Abdallah, the uncle of his competitor. After an irretrievable defeat, the caliph escaped to Mosul; but the colours of the Abbassides were displayed from the rampart; he suddenly repassed the Tigris, cast a melancholy look on his palace of Haran, crossed the Euphrates, abandoned the fortifications of Damascus, and, without halting in Palestine, pitched his last and fatal camp at Busr on the banks of the Nile³⁷. His speed was urged by the incessant diligence of Abdallah, who in every step of the pursuit acquired strength and reputation: the remains of the white faction were finally vanquished in Egypt; and the lance, which terminated the life and anxiety of Mervan, was not less welcome perhaps to the unfortunate than to the victorious chief. The merciless inquisition of the conqueror eradicated the most distant branches of the hostile race: their bones were scattered, their memory was accursed, and the martyrdom of Hossein was abundantly revenged on the posterity of his tyrants. Four score of the Ommiades, who had yielded to the faith or clemency of their foes, were invited to a banquet at Damascus. The laws of hospitality

Fall of the
Omniades,
A. D. 750,
February 10.

were violated by a promiscuous massacre: the board was spread over their fallen bodies; and the festivity of the guests was enlivened by the music of their dying groans. By the event of the civil war the dynasty of the Abbassides was firmly established; but the Christians only could triumph in the mutual hatred and common loss of the disciples of Mahomet³⁸.

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Yet the thousands who were swept away by the sword of war might have been speedily retrieved in the succeeding generation, if the consequences of the revolution had not tended to dissolve the power and unity of the empire of the Saracens. In the proscription of the Ommiades, a royal youth of the name of Abdalrahman alone escaped the rage of his enemies, who hunted the wandering exile from the banks of the Euphrates to the vallies of mount Atlas. His presence in the neighbourhood of Spain revived the zeal of the white faction. The name and cause of the Abbassides had been first vindicated by the Persians: the West had been pure from civil arms; and the servants of the abdicated family still held, by a precarious tenure, the inheritance of their lands and the offices of government. Strongly prompted by gratitude, indignation, and fear, they invited the grandson of the caliph Hashem to ascend the throne of his ancestors; and in his desperate condition, the extremes of rashness and prudence were almost the same. The acclamations of the people saluted his landing on the coast of Andalusia; and, after a successful struggle, Abdalrahman established the

Revolt of
Spain,
A. D. 755.

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throne of Cordova, and was the father of the Ommiades of Spain, who reigned above two hundred and fifty years from the Atlantic to the Pyrenees³⁹. He flew in battle a lieutenant of the Abbassides, who had invaded his dominions with a fleet and army: the head of Ala, in salt and camphire, was suspended by a daring messenger before the palace of Mecca; and the caliph Almanzor rejoiced in his safety, that he was removed by seas and lands from such a formidable adversary. Their mutual designs or declarations of offensive war evaporated without effect; but instead of opening a door to the conquest of Europe, Spain was dissevered from the trunk of the monarchy, engaged in perpetual hostility with the East, and inclined to peace and friendship with the Christian sovereigns of Constantinople and France. The example of the Ommiades was imitated by the real or fictitious progeny of Ali, the Edrissites of Mauritania, and the more powerful Fatimites of Africa and Egypt. In the tenth century, the chair of Mahomet was disputed by three caliphs or commanders of the faithful, who reigned at Bagdad, Cairoan, and Cordova, excommunicated each other, and agreed only in a principle of discord, that a sectary is more odious and criminal than an unbeliever⁴⁰.

Triple division of the caliphate.

Magnificence of the caliphs,
A. D.
750—960.

Mecca was the patrimony of the line of Hashem, yet the Abbassides were never tempted to reside either in the birth-place or the city of the prophet. Damascus was disgraced by the choice, and polluted with the blood, of the Ommiades; and after some

hesitation, Almanfor, the brother and successor of Saffah, laid the foundations of Bagdad ⁴¹, the Imperial seat of his posterity during a reign of five hundred years ⁴². The chosen spot is on the eastern bank of the Tigris about fifteen miles above the ruins of Modain: the double wall was of a circular form; and such was the rapid encrease of a capital, now dwindled to a provincial town, that the funeral of a popular saint might be attended by eight hundred thousand men and sixty thousand women of Bagdad and the adjacent villages. In this *city of peace* ⁴³, amidst the riches of the East, the Abbassides soon disdained the abstinence and frugality of the first caliphs, and aspired to emulate the magnificence of the Persian kings. After his wars and buildings, Almanfor left behind him in gold and silver about thirty millions sterling ⁴⁴; and this treasure was exhausted in a few years by the vices or virtues of his children. His son Mahadi, in a single pilgrimage to Mecca, expended six millions of dinars of gold. A pious and charitable motive may sanctify the foundation of cisterns and caravanferas, which he distributed along a measured road of seven hundred miles; but his train of camels, laden with snow, could serve only to astonish the natives of Arabia, and to refresh the fruits and liquors of the royal banquet ⁴⁵. The courtiers would surely praise the liberality of his grandson Almamon, who gave away four fifths of the income of a province, a sum of two millions four hundred thousand gold dinars, before he drew his foot from the stirrup. At the nuptials of the

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same prince, a thousand pearls of the largest size were showered on the head of the bride⁴⁶, and a lottery of lands and houses displayed the capricious bounty of fortune. The glories of the court were brightened rather than impaired in the decline of the empire; and a Greek ambassador might admire or pity the magnificence of the feeble Moctader. "The caliph's whole army," says the historian Abulfeda, "both horse and foot, was under arms, " which together made a body of one hundred " and sixty thousand men. His state-officers, " the favourite slaves, stood near him in splendid " apparel, their belts glittering with gold and " gems. Near them were seven thousand eunuchs, " four thousand of them white, the remainder " black. The porters or door-keepers were in " number seven hundred. Barges and boats, with " the most superb decorations, were seen swimming " upon the Tigris. Nor was the palace itself less " splendid, in which were hung up thirty-eight " thousand pieces of tapestry, twelve thousand " five hundred of which were of silk embroidered " with gold. The carpets on the floor were " twenty-two thousand. An hundred lions were " brought out with a keeper to each lion⁴⁷. " Among the other spectacles of rare and stupendous " luxury, was a tree of gold and silver spreading " into eighteen large branches, on which, and " on the lesser boughs, sat a variety of birds " made of the same precious metals, as well as " the leaves of the tree. While the machinery " affected spontaneous motions, the several birds " warbled

“warbled their natural harmony. Through this
 “scene of magnificence, the Greek ambassador
 “was led by the visir to the foot of the caliph’s
 “throne⁴⁸.” In the West, the Omniades of
 Spain supported, with equal pomp, the title of
 commander of the faithful. Three miles from
 Cordova, in honour of his favourite sultana, the
 third and greatest of the Abdalrahmans constructed
 the city, palace, and gardens of Zehra. Twenty-
 five years, and above three millions sterling,
 were employed by the founder: his liberal taste
 invited the artists of Constantinople, the most
 skilful sculptors and architects of the age; and the
 buildings were sustained or adorned by twelve
 hundred columns of Spanish and African, of Greek
 and Italian marble. The hall of audience was
 encrusted with gold and pearls, and a great basin
 in the centre, was surrounded with the curious
 and costly figures of birds and quadrupeds. In a
 lofty pavilion of the gardens, one of these basins
 and fountains, so delightful in a sultry climate,
 was replenished not with water, but with the
 purest quicksilver. The seraglio of Abdalrahman,
 his wives, concubines, and black eunuchs,
 amounted to six thousand three hundred persons;
 and he was attended to the field by a guard of
 twelve thousand horse, whose belts and scymetars
 were studded with gold⁴⁹.

In a private condition, our desires are perpetually
 repressed by poverty and subordination; but the
 lives and labours of millions are devoted to the
 service of a despotic prince, whose laws are

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 quences on
 private and
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blindly obeyed, and whose wishes are instantly gratified. Our imagination is dazzled by the splendid picture; and whatever may be the cool dictates of reason, there are few among us who would obstinately refuse a trial of the comforts and the cares of royalty. It may therefore be of some use to borrow the experience of the same Abdalrahman, whose magnificence has perhaps excited our admiration and envy, and to transcribe an authentic memorial which was found in the closet of the deceased caliph. "I have now reigned
" above fifty years in victory or peace; beloved
" by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and
" respected by my allies. Riches and honours,
" power and pleasure, have waited on my call,
" nor does any earthly blessing appear to have
" been wanting to my felicity. In this situation,
" I have diligently numbered the days of pure
" and genuine happiness which have fallen to my
" lot: they amount to FOURTEEN: — O man!
" place not thy confidence in this present world".

The luxury of the caliphs, so useless to their private happiness, relaxed the nerves, and terminated the progress, of the Arabian empire. Temporal and spiritual conquest had been the sole occupation of the first successors of Mahomet; and after supplying themselves with the necessaries of life, the whole revenue was scrupulously devoted to that salutary work. The Abbassides were impoverished by the multitude of their wants and their contempt of œconomy. Instead of pursuing the great object of ambition, their leisure, their

affections, the powers of their mind, were diverted by pomp and pleasure: the rewards of valour were embezzled by women and eunuchs, and the royal camp was encumbered by the luxury of the palace. A similar temper was diffused among the subjects of the caliph. Their stern enthusiasm was softened by time and prosperity: they sought riches in the occupations of industry, fame in the pursuits of literature, and happiness in the tranquillity of domestic life. War was no longer the passion of the Saracens; and the increase of pay, the repetition of donatives, were insufficient to allure the posterity of those voluntary champions who had crowded to the standard of Abubeker and Omar for the hopes of spoil and of paradise.

Under the reign of the Ommiades, the studies of the Moslems were confined to the interpretation of the Koran, and the eloquence and poetry of their native tongue. A people continually exposed to the dangers of the field, must esteem the healing powers of medicine or rather of surgery: but the starving physicians of Arabia murmured a complaint, that exercise and temperance deprived them of the greatest part of their practice¹. After their civil and domestic wars, the subjects of the Abbassides, awakening from this mental lethargy, found leisure and felt curiosity for the acquisition of profane science. This spirit was first encouraged by the caliph Almanfor, who besides his knowledge of the Mahometan law, had applied himself with success to the study of astronomy. But when the sceptre devolved to Almamon, the seventh of the

Introduction
of learning
among the
Arabians,
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&c. 813, &c.

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Abbassides, he completed the designs of his grandfather, and invited the muses from their ancient seats. His ambassadors at Constantinople, his agents in Armenia, Syria, and Egypt, collected the volumes of Grecian science: at his command they were translated by the most skilful interpreters into the Arabic language: his subjects were exhorted assiduously to peruse these instructive writings; and the successor of Mahomet assisted with pleasure and modesty at the assemblies and disputations of the learned. "He was not ignorant," says Abulpharagius, "that *they* are the elect of God, his best and most useful servants, whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties. The mean ambition of the Chinese or the Turks may glory in the industry of their hands or the indulgence of their brutal appetites. Yet these dextrous artists must view, with hopeless emulation, the hexagons and pyramids of the cells of a bee-hive²: these fortitudinous heroes are awed by the superior fierceness of the lions and tigers; and in their amorous enjoyments, they are much inferior to the vigour of the grossest and most sordid quadrupeds. The teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of a world, which, without their aid, would again sink in ignorance and barbarism³." The zeal and curiosity of Almamon were imitated by succeeding princes of the line of Abbas: their rivals, the Fatimites of Africa and the Omniades of Spain, were the patrons of the learned, as well as the commanders

of the faithful: the same royal prerogative was claimed by their independent emirs of the provinces; and their emulation diffused the taste and the rewards of science from Samarcand and Bochara to Fez and Cordova. The visir of a sultan consecrated a sum of two hundred thousand pieces of gold to the foundation of a college at Bagdad, which he endowed with an annual revenue of fifteen thousand dinars. The fruits of instruction were communicated, perhaps at different times, to six thousand disciples of every degree, from the son of the noble to that of the mechanic: a sufficient allowance was provided for the indigent scholars, and the merit or industry of the professors was repaid with adequate stipends. In every city the productions of Arabic literature were copied and collected by the curiosity of the studious and the vanity of the rich. A private doctor refused the invitation of the sultan of Bochara, because the carriage of his books would have required four hundred camels. The royal library of the Fatimites consisted of one hundred thousand manuscripts, elegantly transcribed and splendidly bound, which were lent, without jealousy or avarice, to the students of Cairo. Yet this collection must appear moderate, if we can believe that the Omniades of Spain had formed a library of six hundred thousand volumes, forty-four of which were employed in the mere catalogue. Their capital, Cordova, with the adjacent towns of Malaga, Almeria, and Murcia, had given birth to more than three hundred writers, and

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 . LII. above seventy public libraries were opened in the cities of the Andalusian kingdom. The age of Arabian learning continued about five hundred years, till the great eruption of the Moguls, and was coæval with the darkest and most slothful period of European annals; but since the sun of science has arisen in the West, it should seem that the Oriental studies have languished and declined⁵⁴.

• Their real
 progress in
 the sciences.

In the libraries of the Arabians, as in those of Europe, the far greater part of the innumerable volumes were possessed only of local value or imaginary merit⁵⁵. The shelves were crowded with orators and poets, whose style was adapted to the taste and manners of their countrymen; with general and partial histories, which each revolving generation supplied with a new harvest of persons and events; with codes and commentaries of jurisprudence, which derived their authority from the law of the prophet; with the interpreters of the Koran, and orthodox tradition, and with the whole theological tribe, polemics, mystics, scholastics, and moralists, the first or the last of writers, according to the different estimate of sceptics or believers. The works of speculation or science may be reduced to the four classes of philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and physic. The sages of Greece were translated and illustrated in the Arabic language, and some treatises, now lost in the original, have been recovered in the versions of the East⁵⁶, which possessed and studied the writings of Aristotle

and Plato, of Euclid and Apollonius, of Ptolemy, Hippocrates, and Galen⁵⁷. Among the ideal systems, which have varied with the fashion of the times, the Arabians adopted the philosophy of the Stagirite, alike intelligible or alike obscure for the readers of every age. Plato wrote for the Athenians, and his allegorical genius is too closely blended with the language and religion of Greece. After the fall of that religion, the Peripatetics, emerging from their obscurity, prevailed in the controversies of the Oriental sects, and their founder was long afterwards restored by the Mahometans of Spain to the Latin schools⁵⁸. The physics, both of the Academy and the Lycæum, as they are built, not on observation, but on argument, have retarded the progress of real knowledge. The metaphysics of infinite, or finite, spirit, have too often been enlisted in the service of superstition. But the human faculties are fortified by the art and practice of dialectics; the ten predicaments of Aristotle collect and methodise our ideas⁵⁹, and his syllogism is the keenest weapon of dispute. It was dextrously wielded in the schools of the Saracens, but as it is more effectual for the detection of error than for the investigation of truth, it is not surprising that new generations of masters and disciples should still revolve in the same circle of logical argument. The mathematics are distinguished by a peculiar privilege, that, in the course of ages, they may always advance, and can never recede. But the

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ancient geometry, if I am not misinformed, was resumed in the same state by the Italians of the fifteenth century; and whatever may be the origin of the name, the science of algebra is ascribed to the Grecian Diophantus by the modest testimony of the Arabs themselves⁶⁰. They cultivated with more success the sublime science of astronomy, which elevates the mind of man to disdain his diminutive planet and momentary existence. The costly instruments of observation were supplied by the caliph Almamon, and the land of the Chaldæans still afforded the same spacious level, the same unclouded horizon. In the plains of Sinaar, and a second time in those of Cufa, his mathematicians accurately measured a degree of the great circle of the earth, and determined at twenty-four thousand miles the entire circumference of our globe⁶¹. From the reign of the Abbassides to that of the grandchildren of Tamerlane, the stars, without the aid of glasses, were diligently observed; and the astronomical tables of Bagdad, Spain, and Samarcand⁶², correct some minute errors, without daring to renounce the hypothesis of Ptolemy, without advancing a step towards the discovery of the solar system. In the eastern courts, the truths of science could be recommended only by ignorance and folly, and the astronomer would have been disregarded, had he not debased his wisdom or honesty by the vain predictions of astrology⁶³. But in the science of medicine, the Arabians have been deservedly applauded. The name of

Mesua and Geber, of Razis and Avicenna, are ranked with the Grecian masters; in the city of Bagdad, eight hundred and sixty physicians were licensed to exercise their lucrative profession “: in Spain, the life of the Catholic princes was entrusted to the skill of the Saracens “, and the school of Salerno, their legitimate offspring, revived in Italy and Europe the precepts of the healing art “. The success of each professor must have been influenced by personal and accidental causes; but we may form a less fanciful estimate of the general knowledge of anatomy “, botany “, and chemistry “, the threefold basis of their theory and practice. A superstitious reverence for the dead confined both the Greeks and the Arabians to the dissection of apes and quadrupeds; the more solid and visible parts were known in the time of Galen, and the finer scrutiny of the human frame was reserved for the microscope and the injections of modern artists. Botany is an active science, and the discoveries of the torrid zone might enrich the herbal of Dioscorides with two thousand plants. Some traditionary knowledge might be secreted in the temples and monasteries of Egypt; much useful experience had been acquired in the practice of arts and manufactures; but the science of chemistry owes its origin and improvement to the industry of the Saracens. They first invented and named the alembic for the purposes of distillation, analysed the substances of the three kingdoms of nature, tried the distinction and

U H A P. affinities of alcalis and acids, and converted the
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Want of erudition, taste, and freedom.

But the Moslems deprived themselves of the principal benefits of a familiar intercourse with Greece and Rome, the knowledge of antiquity, the purity of taste, and the freedom of thought. Confident in the riches of their native tongue, the Arabians disdained the study of any foreign idiom. The Greek interpreters were chosen among their Christian subjects; they formed their translations, sometimes on the original text, more frequently perhaps on a Syriac version: and in the crowd of astronomers and physicians, there is no example of a poet, an orator, or even an historian, being taught to speak the language of the Saracens⁷⁰. The mythology of Homer would have provoked the abhorrence of those stern fanatics: they possessed in lazy ignorance the colonies of the Macedonians, and the provinces of Carthage and Rome: the heroes of Plutarch and Livy were buried in oblivion; and the history of the world before Mahomet was reduced to a short legend of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the Persian kings. Our education in the Greek and Latin schools may have fixed

in our mind a standard of exclusive taste; and I am not forward to condemn the literature and judgment of nations, of whose language I am ignorant. Yet I *know* that the classics have much to teach, and I *believe* that the Orientals have much to learn: the temperate dignity of style, the graceful proportions of art, the forms of visible and intellectual beauty, the just delineation of character and passion, the rhetoric of narrative and argument, the regular fabric of epic and dramatic poetry⁷¹. The influence of truth and reason is of a less ambiguous complexion. The philosophers of Athens and Rome enjoyed the blessings, and asserted the rights, of civil and religious freedom. Their moral and political writings might have gradually unlocked the fetters of Eastern despotism, diffused a liberal spirit of enquiry and toleration, and encouraged the Arabian sages to suspect that their caliph was a tyrant and their prophet an impostor⁷². The instinct of superstition was alarmed by the introduction even of the abstract sciences; and the more rigid doctors of the law condemned the rash and pernicious curiosity of Almamon⁷³. To the thirst of martyrdom, the vision of paradise, and the belief of predestination, we must ascribe the invincible enthusiasm of the prince and people. And the sword of the Saracens became less formidable, when their youth was drawn away from the camp to the college, when the armies of the faithful presumed to read and to reflect. Yet the foolish vanity of the Greeks was jealous

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Wars of Ha-
run al Rashid
against the
Romans,

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of their studies, and reluctantly imparted the sacred fire to the Barbarians of the East⁷⁴.

In the bloody conflict of the Ommiades and Abbassides, the Greeks had stolen the opportunity of avenging their wrongs and enlarging their limits. But a severe retribution was exacted by Mohadi, the third caliph of the new dynasty, who seized in his turn the favourable opportunity, while a woman and a child, Irene and Constantine, were seated on the Byzantine throne. An army of ninety-five thousand Persians and Arabs was sent from the Tigris to the Thracian Bosphorus, under the command of Harun⁷⁵, or Aaron, the second son of the commander of the faithful. His encampment on the opposite heights of Chrysopolis or Scutari, informed Irene, in her palace of Constantinople, of the loss of her troops and provinces. With the consent or connivance of their sovereign her ministers subscribed an ignominious peace; and the exchange of some royal gifts could not disguise the annual tribute of seventy thousand dinars of gold, which was imposed on the Roman empire. The Saracens had too rashly advanced into the midst of a distant and hostile land: their retreat was solicited by the promise of faithful guides and plentiful markets; and not a Greek had courage to whisper, that their weary forces might be surrounded and destroyed in their necessary passage between a slippery mountain and the river Sangarius. Five years after this expedition, Harun ascended the throne of his father and his elder

brother; the most powerful and vigorous monarch of his race, illustrious in the West, as the ally of Charlemagne, and familiar to the most childish readers, as the perpetual hero of the Arabian tales. His title to the name of *Al Rashid* (the *Just*) is sullied by the extirpation of the generous, perhaps the innocent, Barmecides; yet he could listen to the complaint of a poor widow who had been pillaged by his troops, and who dared, in a passage of the Koran, to threaten the inattentive despot with the judgment of God and posterity. His court was adorned with luxury and science; but, in a reign of three-and-twenty years, Harun repeatedly visited his provinces from Chorasan to Egypt; nine times he performed the pilgrimage of Mecca; eight times he invaded the territories of the Romans; and as often as they declined the payment of the tribute, they were taught to feel that a month of depredation was more costly than a year of submission. But when the unnatural mother of Constantine was deposed and banished, her successor Nicephorus resolved to obliterate this badge of servitude and disgrace. The epistle of the emperor to the caliph was pointed with an allusion to the game of chess, which had already spread from Persia to Greece. “The queen (he spoke of Irene) considered you as a rook and herself as a pawn. That pusillanimous female submitted to pay a tribute, the double of which she ought to have exacted from the Barbarians. Restore therefore the fruits of your injustice, or abide

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“ the determination of the sword. ” At these words the ambassadors cast a bundle of swords before the foot of the throne. The caliph smiled at the menace, and drawing his scymetar, *samsamah*, a weapon of historic or fabulous renown, he cut asunder the feeble arms of the Greeks, without turning the edge, or endangering the temper, of his blade. He then dictated an epistle of tremendous brevity: “ In the name of the most merciful God, Harun al Rashid, commander of the faithful, to Nicephorus, the Roman dog. I have read thy letter, O thou son of an unbelieving mother. Thou shalt not hear, thou shalt behold my reply. ” It was written in characters of blood and fire on the plains of Phrygia; and the warlike celerity of the Arabs could only be checked by the arts of deceit and the shew of repentance. The triumphant caliph retired, after the fatigues of the campaign, to his favourite palace of Racca on the Euphrates⁷⁶; but the distance of five hundred miles, and the inclemency of the season, encouraged his adversary to violate the peace. Nicephorus was astonished by the bold and rapid march of the commander of the faithful, who repassed, in the depth of winter, the snows of mount Taurus: his stratagems of policy and war were exhausted; and the perfidious Greek escaped with three wounds from a field of battle overspread with forty thousand of his subjects. Yet the emperor was ashamed of submission, and the caliph was resolved on victory.

One hundred and thirty-five thousand regular soldiers received pay, and were inscribed in the military roll; and above three hundred thousand persons of every denomination marched under the black standard of the Abbassides. They swept the surface of Asia Minor far beyond Tyana and Ancyra, and invested the Pontic Heraclea⁷⁷, once a flourishing state, now a paltry town; at that time capable of sustaining in her antique walls a month's siege against the forces of the East. The ruin was complete, the spoil was ample; but if Harun had been conversant with Grecian story, he would have regretted the statue of Hercules, whose attributes, the club, the bow, the quiver, and the lion's hide, were sculptured in massy gold. The progress of desolation by sea and land, from the Euxine to the isle of Cyprus, compelled the emperor Nicephorus to retract his haughty defiance. In the new treaty, the ruins of Heraclea were left for ever as a lesson and a trophy; and the coin of the tribute was marked with the image and superscription of Harun and his three sons⁷⁸. Yet this plurality of lords might contribute to remove the dishonour of the Roman name. After the death of their father, the heirs of the caliph were involved in civil discord, and the conqueror, the liberal Almamon, was sufficiently engaged in the restoration of domestic peace and the introduction of foreign science.

Under the reign of Almamon at Bagdad, of Michael the Stammerer at Constantinople, the islands of Crete⁷⁹ and Sicily were subdued by

The Arabs
subdue the
isle of Crete,
A. D. 823.

CHAP. the Arabs. The former of these conquests is
 LII. disdained by their own writers, who were ignorant
 of the fame of Jupiter and Minos, but it has not
 been overlooked by the Byzantine historians,
 who now begin to cast a clearer light on the
 affairs of their own times⁸⁰. A band of Anda-
 lusian volunteers, discontented with the climate
 or government of Spain, explored the adventures
 of the sea; but as they sailed in no more than
 ten or twenty gallies, their warfare must be
 branded with the name of piracy. As the subjects
 and sectaries of the *white* party, they might law-
 fully invade the dominions of the *black* caliphs.
 A rebellious faction introduced them into Alex-
 andria⁸¹; they cut in pieces both friends and
 foes, pillaged the churches and the mosch, sold
 above six thousand Christian captives, and main-
 tained their station in the capital of Egypt, till
 they were oppressed by the forces and the presence
 of Almamon himself. From the mouth of the
 Nile to the Hellespont, the islands and seacoasts
 both of the Greeks and Moslems were exposed to
 their depredations; they saw, they envied, they
 tasted, the fertility of Crete, and soon returned with
 forty gallies to a more serious attack. The Andalu-
 sians wandered over the land fearless and unmolest-
 ed; but when they descended with their plunder to
 the seashore, their vessels were in flames, and their
 chief, Abu Caab, confessed himself the author of
 the mischief. Their clamours accused his madness or
 treachery. "Of what do you complain?" replied
 the crafty emir. "I have brought you to a land
 flowing

“ flowing with milk and honey. Here is your
 “ true country; repose from your toils, and forget
 “ the barren place of your nativity.” “ And
 “ our wives and children?” “ Your beauteous
 “ captives will supply the place of your wives,
 “ and in their embraces you will soon become
 “ the fathers of a new progeny.” The first
 habitation was their camp, with a ditch and
 rampart, in the bay of Suda; but an apostate
 monk led them to a more desirable position
 in the eastern parts; and the name of Candax,
 their fortress and colony, has been extended to
 the whole island, under the corrupt and modern
 appellation of *Candia*. The hundred cities of the
 age of Minos were diminished to thirty; and of
 these, only one, most probably Cydonia, had
 courage to retain the substance of freedom and
 the profession of Christianity. The Saracens of
 Crete soon repaired the loss of their navy; and
 the timbers of mount Ida were launched into
 the main. During an hostile period, of one
 hundred and thirty-eight years, the princes of
 Constantinople attacked these licentious corsairs
 with fruitless courses and ineffectual arms.

The loss of Sicily⁸² was occasioned by an act
 of superstitious rigour. An amorous youth who
 had stolen a nun from her cloyster, was sentenced
 by the emperor to the amputation of his tongue.
 Euphemius appealed to the reason and policy of
 the Saracens of Africa; and soon returned with
 the Imperial purple, a fleet of one hundred
 ships, and an army of seven hundred horse and

C H A P.
 LIII.

and of Sicily,
 A D.
 827—878.

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LII.

ten thousand foot. They landed at Mazara near the ruins of the ancient Selinus; but after some partial victories, Syracuse³³ was delivered by the Greeks, the apostate was slain before her walls, and his African friends were reduced to the necessity of feeding on the flesh of their own horses. In their turn they were relieved by a powerful reinforcement of their brethren of Andalusia; the largest and western part of the island was gradually reduced, and the commodious harbour of Palermo was chosen for the seat of the naval and military power of the Saracens. Syracuse preserved about fifty years the faith which she had sworn to Christ and to Cæsar. In the last and fatal siege, her citizens displayed some remnant of the spirit which had formerly resisted the powers of Athens and Carthage. They stood above twenty days against the battering-rams and *catapultæ*, the mines and tortoises of the besiegers, and the place might have been relieved, if the mariners of the Imperial fleet had not been detained at Constantinople in building a church to the Virgin Mary. The deacon Theodosius, with the bishop and clergy, was dragged in chains from the altar to Palermo, cast into a subterraneous dungeon, and exposed to the hourly peril of death or apostacy. His pathetic, and not inelegant complaint, may be read as the epitaph of his country³⁴. From the Roman conquest to this final calamity, Syracuse, now dwindled to the primitive isle of Ortygea, had insensibly declined. Yet the relics were still

precious; the plate of the cathedral weighed five thousand pounds of silver; the entire spoil was computed at one million of pieces of gold (about four hundred thousand pounds sterling), and the captives must out-number the seventeen thousand Christians, who were transported from the sack of Tauromenium into African servitude. In Sicily, the religion and language of the Greeks were eradicated; and such was the docility of the rising generation, that fifteen thousand boys were circumcised and clothed on the same day with the son of the Fatimite caliph. The Arabian squadrons issued from the harbours of Palermo, Biserta, and Tunis; an hundred and fifty towns of Calabria and Campania were attacked and pillaged; nor could the suburbs of Rome be defended by the name of the Cæsars and apostles. Had the Mahometans been united, Italy must have fallen an easy and glorious accession to the empire of the prophet. But the caliphs of Bagdad had lost their authority in the West; the Aglabites and Fatimites usurped the provinces of Africa; their emirs of Sicily aspired to independence; and the design of conquest and dominion was degraded to a repetition of predatory inroads²⁵.

In the sufferings of prostrate Italy, the name of Rome awakens a solemn and mournful recollection. A fleet of Saracens from the African coast presumed to enter the mouth of the Tyber, and to approach a city which even yet, in her fallen state, was revered as the metropolis of the

Invasion of
Rome by the
Saracens,
A. D. 846,

CHAP. Christian world. The gates and ramparts were
 LII. guarded by a trembling people; but the tombs and temples of St. Peter and St. Paul were left exposed in the suburbs of the Vatican and of the Ostian way. Their invisible sanctity had protected them against the Goths, the Vandals, and the Lombards; but the Arabs disdained both the gospel and the legend; and their rapacious spirit was approved and animated by the precepts of the Koran. The Christian *idols* were stripped of their costly offerings, a silver altar was torn away from the shrine of St. Peter; and if the bodies or the buildings were left entire, their deliverance must be imputed to the haste, rather than the scruples, of the Saracens. In their course along the Appian way, they pillaged Fundi and besieged Gayeta; but they had turned aside from the walls of Rome, and, by their divisions, the Capitol was saved from the yoke of the prophet of Mecca. The same danger still impended on the heads of the Roman people; and their domestic force was unequal to the assault of an African emir. They claimed the protection of their Latin sovereign; but the Carlovingian standard was overthrown by a detachment of the Barbarians: they meditated the restoration of the Greek emperors; but the attempt was treasonable, and the succour remote and precarious. Their distress appeared to receive some aggravation from the death of their spiritual and temporal chief; but the pressing emergency superseded the forms and intrigues of

an election; and the unanimous choice of pope Leo the fourth⁸⁷ was the safety of the church and city. This pontiff was born a Roman; the courage of the first ages of the republic glowed in his breast; and, amidst the ruins of his country, he stood erect, like one of the firm and lofty columns that rear their heads above the fragments of the Roman forum. The first days of his reign were consecrated to the purification and removal of relics, to prayers and processions, and to all the solemn offices of religion, which served at least to heal the imagination, and restore the hopes, of the multitude. The public defence had been long neglected, not from the presumption of peace, but from the distress and poverty of the times. As far as the scantiness of his means, and the shortness of his leisure would allow, the ancient walls were repaired by the command of Leo; fifteen towers, in the most accessible stations, were built or renewed; two of these commanded on either side the Tyber; and an iron chain was drawn across the stream to impede the ascent of an hostile navy. The Romans were assured of a short respite by the welcome news, that the siege of Gayeta had been raised, and that a part of the enemy, with their sacrilegious plunder, had perished in the waves.

But the storm, which had been delayed, soon burst upon them with redoubled violence. The Aglabite⁸⁸, who reigned in Africa, had inherited from his father a treasure and an army: a fleet

Victory and
reign of
Leo IV.
A. D. 849.

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LII.

of Arabs and Moors, after a short refreshment in the harbours of Sardinia, cast anchor before the mouth of the Tyber, sixteen miles from the city; and their discipline and numbers appeared to threaten, not a transient inroad, but a serious design of conquest and dominion. But the vigilance of Leo had formed an alliance with the vassals of the Greek empire, the free and maritime states of Gayeta, Naples, and Amalfi; and in the hour of danger, their gallies appeared in the port of Ostia under the command of Cæsarius the son of the Neapolitan duke, a noble and valiant youth, who had already vanquished the fleets of the Saracens. With his principal companions, Cæsarius was invited to the Lateran palace, and the dextrous pontiff affected to enquire their errand, and to accept with joy and surprise their providential succour. The city bands, in arms, attended their father to Ostia, where he reviewed and blessed his generous deliverers. They kissed his feet, received the communion with martial devotion, and listened to the prayer of Leo, that the same God who had supported St. Peter and St. Paul on the waves of the sea, would strengthen the hands of his champions against the adversaries of his holy name. After a similar prayer, and with equal resolution, the Moslems advanced to the attack of the Christian gallies, which preserved their advantageous station along the coast. The victory inclined to the side of the allies, when it was less gloriously decided in their favour by a sudden tempest,

which confounded the skill and courage of the stoutest mariners. The Christians were sheltered in a friendly harbour, while the Africans were scattered and dashed in pieces among the rocks and islands of an hostile shore. Those who escaped from shipwreck and hunger, neither found nor deserved mercy at the hands of their implacable pursuers. The sword and the gibbet reduced the dangerous multitude of captives; and the remainder was more usefully employed, to restore the sacred edifices which they had attempted to subvert. The pontiff, at the head of the citizens and allies, paid his grateful devotion at the shrines of the apostles; and, among the spoils of this naval victory, thirteen Arabian bows of pure and massy silver were suspended round the altar of the fisherman of Galilee. The reign of Leo the fourth was employed in the defence and ornament of the Roman state. The churches were renewed and embellished: near four thousand pounds of silver were consecrated to repair the losses of St. Peter; and his sanctuary was decorated with a plate of gold of the weight of two hundred and sixteen pounds; embossed with the portraits of the pope and emperor, and encircled with a string of pearls. Yet this vain magnificence reflects less glory on the character of Leo, than the paternal care with which he rebuilt the walls of Horta and Ameria; and transported the wandering inhabitants of Centumcellæ to his new foundation of Leopolis, twelve miles from the sea-shore". By his liberal-

C H A P.
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ity, a colony of Corficans, with their wives and children, was planted in the station of Porto at the mouth of the Tyber: the falling city was restored for their use, the fields and vineyards were divided among the new settlers: their first efforts were assisted by a gift of horses and cattle; and the hardy exiles, who breathed revenge against the Saracens, swore to live and die under the standard of St. Peter. The nations of the west and north who visited the threshold of the apostles had gradually formed the large and populous suburb of the Vatican, and their various habitations were distinguished in the language of the times, as the *schools* of the Greeks and Goths, of the Lombards and Saxons. But this venerable spot was still open to sacrilegious insult: the design of inclosing it with walls and towers exhausted all that authority could command, or charity would supply: and the pious labour of four years was animated in every season, and at every hour, by the presence of the indefatigable pontiff. The love of fame, a generous but worldly passion, may be detected in the name of the *Leonine city*, which he bestowed on the Vatican, yet the pride of the dedication was tempered with Christian penance and humility. The boundary was trod by the bishop and his clergy, barefoot, in sackcloth, and ashes; the songs of triumph were modulated to psalms and litanies; the walls were besprinkled with holy water; and the ceremony was concluded with a prayer, that under the guardian

Foundation
of the Leo-
nine city,
A. D. 852.

care of the apostles and the angelic host, both the old and the new Rome might ever be preserved pure, prosperous, and impregnable⁹⁰.

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The emperor Theophilus, son of Michael the Stammerer, was one of the most active and high-spirited princes who reigned at Constantinople during the middle age. In offensive or defensive war, he marched in person five times against the Saracens, formidable in his attack, esteemed by the enemy in his losses and defeats. In the last of these expeditions he penetrated into Syria, and besieged the obscure town of Sozopetra; the casual birth-place of the caliph Motassem, whose father Harun was attended in peace or war by the most favoured of his wives and concubines. The revolt of a Persian impostor employed at that moment the arms of the Saracen, and he could only intercede in favour of a place for which he felt and acknowledged some degree of filial affection. These solicitations determined the emperor to wound his pride in so sensible a part. Sozopetra was levelled with the ground, the Syrian prisoners were marked or mutilated with ignominious cruelty, and a thousand female captives were forced away from the adjacent territory. Among these a matron of the house of Abbas invoked, in an agony of despair, the name of Motassem; and the insults of the Greeks engaged the honour of her kinsman to avenge his indignity, and to answer her appeal. Under the reign of the two elder brothers, the inheritance of the youngest had been confined to

The Amorian
war between
Theophilus
and Motas-
sem,
A. D. 838,

CHAP. Anatolia, Armenia, Georgia, and Circassia; this
 LII. frontier station had exercised his military talents; and among his accidental claims to the name of *Ostionary* ¹¹, the most meritorious are the *eight* battles which he gained or fought against the enemies of the Koran. In this personal quarrel, the troops of Irak, Syria, and Egypt, were recruited from the tribes of Arabia and the Turkish hords: his cavalry might be numerous, though we should deduct some myriads from the hundred and thirty thousand horses of the royal stables, and the expence of the armament was computed at four millions sterling, or one hundred thousand pounds of gold. From Tarsus, the place of assembly, the Saracens advanced in three divisions along the high road of Constantinople: Motassem himself commanded the centre, and the vanguard was given to his son Abbas, who, in the trial of the first adventures, might succeed with the more glory, or fail with the least reproach. In the revenge of his injury, the caliph prepared to retaliate a similar affront. The father of Theophilus was a native of Amorium ²² in Phrygia: the original seat of the Imperial house had been adorned with privileges and monuments; and, whatever might be the indifference of the people, Constantinople itself was scarcely of more value in the eyes of the sovereign and his court. The name of AMORIUM was inscribed on the shields of the Saracens; and their three armies were again united under the walls of the devoted city. It had been proposed

by the wisest counsellors, to evacuate Amorium, to remove the inhabitants, and to abandon the empty structures to the vain resentment of the Barbarians. The emperor embraced the more generous resolution of defending, in a siege and battle, the country of his ancestors. When the armies drew near, the front of the Mahometan line appeared to a Roman eye more closely planted with spears and javelins; but the event of the action was not glorious on either side to the national troops. The Arabs were broken, but it was by the swords of thirty thousand Persians, who had obtained service and settlement in the Byzantine empire. The Greeks were repulsed and vanquished, but it was by the arrows of the Turkish cavalry; and had not their bow-strings been damped and relaxed by the evening rain, very few of the Christians could have escaped with the emperor from the field of battle. They breathed at Dorylæum, at the distance of three days; and Theophilus, reviewing his trembling squadrons, forgave the common flight both of the prince and people. After this discovery of his weakness, he vainly hoped to deprecate the fate of Amorium: the inexorable caliph rejected with contempt his prayers and promises; and detained the Roman ambassadors to be the witnesses of his great revenge. They had nearly been the witnesses of his shame. The vigorous assaults of fifty-five days were encountered by a faithful governor, a veteran garrison, and a desperate people; and

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the Saracens must have raised the siege, if a domestic traitor had not pointed to the weakest part of the wall, a place which was decorated with the statues of a lion and a bull. The vow of Motassem was accomplished with unrelenting rigour: tired, rather than fatiated, with destruction, he returned to his new palace of Samara, in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, while the *unfortunate* ⁹³ Theophilus implored the tardy and doubtful aid of his Western rival the emperor of the Franks. Yet in the siege of Amorium above seventy thousand Moslems had perished: their loss had been revenged by the slaughter of thirty thousand Christians, and the sufferings of an equal number of captives, who were treated as the most atrocious criminals. Mutual necessity could sometimes extort the exchange or ransom of prisoners ⁹⁴; but in the national and religious conflict of the two empires, peace was without confidence, and war without mercy. Quarter was seldom given in the field; those who escaped the edge of the sword were condemned to hopeless servitude, or exquisite torture; and a Catholic emperor relates, with visible satisfaction, the execution of the Saracens of Crete, who were flayed alive, or plunged into chaldrons of boiling oil ⁹⁵. To a point of honour Motassem had sacrificed a flourishing city, two hundred thousand lives, and the property of millions. The same caliph descended from his horse, and dirtied his robe to relieve the distress of a decrepit old man, who, with his

laden ass, had tumbled into a ditch. On which of these actions did he reflect with the most pleasure, when he was summoned by the angel of death ⁹⁶?

With Motassem, the eighth of the Abbassides, the glory of his family and nation expired. When the Arabian conquerors had spread themselves over the East; and were mingled with the servile crowds of Persia, Syria, and Egypt, they insensibly lost the freeborn and martial virtues of the desert. The courage of the south is the artificial fruit of discipline and prejudice; the active power of enthusiasm had decayed, and the mercenary forces of the caliphs were recruited in those climates of the north, of which valour is the hardy and spontaneous production. Of the Turks ⁹⁷ who dwelt beyond the Oxus and Jaxartes, the robust youths, either taken in war, or purchased in trade, were educated in the exercises of the field, and the profession of the Mahometan faith. The Turkish guards stood in arms round the throne of their benefactor, and their chiefs usurped the dominion of the palace and the provinces. Motassem, the first author of this dangerous example, introduced into the capital above fifty thousand Turks: their licentious conduct provoked the public indignation, and the quarrels of the soldiers and people induced the caliph to retire from Bagdad, and establish his own residence and the camp of his Barbarian favourites at Samara on the Tigris, about twelve leagues above the city of Peace ⁹⁸.

C H A P.
LII.

Disorders of
the Turkish
guards,
A. D.
84 — 870,
&c.

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LII.

His son Motawakkel was a jealous and cruel tyrant: odious to his subjects, he cast himself on the fidelity of the strangers, and these strangers, ambitious and apprehensive, were tempted by the rich promise of a revolution. At the instigation, or at least in the cause of his son, they burst into his apartment at the hour of supper, and the caliph was cut into seven pieces by the same swords which he had recently distributed among the guards of his life and throne. To this throne, yet streaming with a father's blood, Montasser was triumphantly led; but in a reign of six months, he found only the pangs of a guilty conscience. If he wept at the sight of an old tapestry which represented the crime and punishment of the son of Chosroes; if his days were abridged by grief and remorse, we may allow some pity to a parricide; who exclaimed in the bitterness of death, that he had lost both this world, and the world to come. After this act of treason, the ensigns of royalty, the garment and walking-staff of Mahomet, were given and torn away by the foreign mercenaries, who in four years created, deposed, and murdered three commanders of the faithful. As often as the Turks were inflamed by fear, or rage, or avarice, these caliphs were dragged by the feet, exposed naked to the scorching sun, beaten with iron clubs, and compelled to purchase, by the abdication of their dignity, a short reprieve of inevitable fate". At length, however, the fury of the tempest was spent or diverted: the Ab-

bassides returned to the less turbulent residence of Bagdad; the insolence of the Turks was curbed with a firmer and more skilful hand, and their numbers were divided and destroyed in foreign warfare. But the nations of the East had been taught to trample on the successors of the prophet, and the blessings of domestic peace were obtained by the relaxation of strength and discipline. So uniform are the mischiefs of military despotism, that I seem to repeat the story of the prætorians of Rome ***.

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While the flame of enthusiasm was damped by the business, the pleasure, and the knowledge, of the age, it burnt with concentrated heat in the breasts of the chosen few, the congenial spirits, who were ambitious of reigning either in this world or in the next. How carefully soever the book of prophecy had been sealed by the apostle of Mecca, the wishes, and (if we may profane the word) even the reason, of fanaticism, might believe that, after the successive missions of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet, the same God, in the fulness of time, would reveal a still more perfect and permanent law. In the two hundred and seventy-seventh year of the Hegira, and in the neighbourhood of Cufa, an Arabian preacher, of the name of Carmath, assumed the lofty and incomprehensible style of the Guide, the Director, the Demonstration, the Word, the Holy Ghost, the Camel, the Herald of the Messiah, who had conversed with him in a human shape, and the representative of Mohammed

Rise and
 progress of
 the Carma-
 thians,
 A. D.
 890—951.

CHAP. the son of Ali, of St. John the Baptist, and of the
 LIII. angel Gabriel. In his mystic volume, the precepts
 of the Koran were refined to a more spiritual
 sense; he relaxed the duties of ablution, fasting,
 and pilgrimage; allowed the indiscriminate use of
 wine and forbidden food; and nourished the fervour
 of his disciples by the daily repetition of fifty
 prayers. The idleness and ferment of the rustic
 crowd awakened the attention of the magistrates
 of Cufa; a timid persecution assisted the progress
 of the new sect; and the name of the prophet
 became more revered after his person had been
 withdrawn from the world. His twelve apostles
 dispersed themselves among the Bedowens, "a
 " race of men," says Abulfeda, "equally devoid
 " of reason and of religion;" and the success of
 their preaching seemed to threaten Arabia with a
 new revolution. The Carmathians were ripe for
 rebellion, since they disclaimed the title of the
 house of Abbas, and abhorred the worldly pomp
 of the caliphs of Bagdad. They were susceptible
 of discipline, since they vowed a blind and absolute
 submission to their Imam, who was called to the
 prophetic office by the voice of God and the
 people. Instead of the legal tithes, he claimed
 the fifth of their substance and spoil; the most
 flagitious sins were no more than the type of
 disobedience; and the brethren were united and
 concealed by an oath of secrecy. After a bloody
 conflict, they prevailed in the province of Bahrein,
 along the Persian Gulf: far and wide, the tribes
 of the desert were subject to the sceptre, or
 rather

Their mili-
 tary exploits,
 A. D. 900,
 &c.

rather to the sword, of Abu Saïd and his son Abu Taher; and these rebellious imams could muster in the field an hundred and seven thousand fanatics. The mercenaries of the caliph were dismayed at the approach of an enemy who neither asked nor accepted quarter; and the difference between them, in fortitude and patience, is expressive of the change which three centuries of prosperity had effected in the character of the Arabians. Such troops were discomfited in every action; the cities of Racca and Baalbec, of Cufa and Bassora, were taken and pillaged; Bagdad was filled with consternation; and the caliph trembled behind the veils of his palace. In a daring inroad beyond the Tigris, Abu Taher advanced to the gates of the capital with no more than five hundred horse. By the special order of Moctader, the bridges had been broken down, and the person or head of the rebel was expected every hour by the commander of the faithful. His lieutenant, from a motive of fear or pity, apprised Abu Taher of his danger, and recommended a speedy escape. “Your master,” said the intrepid Carmathian to the messenger, “is at the head of thirty thousand soldiers: three such men as these are wanting in his host:” at the same instant, turning to three of his companions, he commanded the first to plunge a dagger into his breast, the second to leap into the Tigris, and the third to cast himself headlong down a precipice. They obeyed without a murmur. “Relate,” continued the imam, “what you have seen: before

CHAP. LII. “ the evening your general shall be chained among
 “ my dogs.” Before the evening, the camp was
 surpris’d and the menace was executed. The
 rapine of the Carmathians was sanctified by their
 aversion to the worship of Mecca: they robbed a
 caravan of pilgrims, and twenty thousand devout
 Moslems were abandoned on the burning sands
 to a death of hunger and thirst. Another year
 they suffered the pilgrims to proceed without
 interruption; but, in the festival of devotion, Abu
 Taher storm’d the holy city, and trampled on
 the most venerable relics of the Mahometan faith.
 Thirty thousand citizens and strangers were put
 to the sword, the sacred precincts were polluted
 by the burial of three thousand dead bodies; the
 well of Zemzem overflowed with blood; the
 golden spout was forced from its place; the veil
 of the Caaba was divided among these impious
 sectaries; and the black stone, the first monument
 of the nation, was borne away in triumph to their
 capital. After this deed of sacrilege and cruelty,
 they continued to infest the confines of Irak, Syria,
 and Egypt; but the vital principle of enthusiasm
 had withered at the root. Their scruples or their
 avarice again opened the pilgrimage of Mecca,
 and restored the black stone of the Caaba, and it
 is needless to enquire into what factions they were
 broken, or by whose swords they were finally
 extirpated. The sect of the Carmathians may be
 considered as the second visible cause of the decline
 and fall of the empire of the caliphs ¹⁰¹.

They pillage
 Mecca,
 A. D. 929,

Revolt of the The third and most obvious cause was the

weight and magnitude of the empire itself. The caliph Almamon might proudly assert, that it was easier for him to rule the East and the West, than to manage a chess-board of two feet square¹⁰²; yet I suspect, that in both those games, he was guilty of many fatal mistakes; and I perceive, that in the distant provinces, the authority of the first and most powerful of the Abbassides was already impaired. The analogy of despotism invests the representative with the full majesty of the prince; the division and balance of powers might relax the habits of obedience, might encourage the passive subject to enquire into the origin and administration of civil government. He who is born in the purple is seldom worthy to reign; but the elevation of a private man, of a peasant perhaps, or a slave, affords a strong presumption of his courage and capacity. The viceroy of a remote kingdom aspires to secure the property and inheritance of his precarious trust; the nations must rejoice in the presence of their sovereign; and the command of armies and treasures are at once the object and the instrument of his ambition. A change was scarcely visible as long as the lieutenants of the caliph were content with their vicarious title; while they solicited for themselves or their sons a renewal of the Imperial grant, and still maintained on the coin, and in the public prayers, the name and prerogative of the commander of the faithful. But in the long and hereditary exercise of power, they assumed the pride and attributes of royalty; the alternative

C H A P.

LII.

provinces,

A. D,

800—986.

CHAP. of peace or war, of reward or punishment, de-
 LII. pended solely on their will; and the revenues of
 their government were reserved for local services
 or private magnificence. Instead of a regular
 supply of men and money, the successors of the
 prophet were flattered with the ostentatious gift
 of an elephant, or a cast of hawks, a suit of
 silk hangings, or some pounds of musk and
 amber¹⁰³.

The inde-
 pendent dy-
 nasties.

The Agla-
 bites

A. D.

800—941.

The Edri-
 sites,

A. D.

829—907.

The Tahe-
 rites.

A. D.

813—872.

After the revolt of Spain, from the temporal
 and spiritual supremacy of the Abbassides, the
 first symptoms of disobedience broke forth in the
 province of Africa. Ibrahim, the son of Aglab,
 the lieutenant of the vigilant and rigid Harun,
 bequeathed to the dynasty of the *Aglabites* the
 inheritance of his name and power. The indolence
 or policy of the caliphs dissembled the injury and
 loss, and pursued only with poison the founder
 of the *Edrisites*¹⁰⁴, who erected the kingdom and
 city of Fez on the shores of the western ocean¹⁰⁵.
 In the East, the first dynasty was that of the
*Tahrites*¹⁰⁶; the posterity of the valiant Taher,
 who, in the civil wars of the sons of Harun, had
 served with too much zeal and success the cause
 of Almamon the younger brother. He was sent
 into honourable exile, to command on the banks
 of the Oxus; and the independence of his succe-
 ssors, who reigned in Chorasan till the fourth
 generation, was palliated by their modest and
 respectful demeanour, the happiness of their sub-
 jects, and the security of their frontier. They were
 supplanted by one of those adventurers so frequent

in the annals of the East, who left his trade of a brazier (from whence the name of *Soffarides*) for the profession of a robber. In a nocturnal visit to the treasure of the prince of Sistan, Jacob, the son of Leith, stumbled over a lump of salt, which he unwarily tasted with his tongue. Salt, among the Orientals, is the symbol of hospitality, and the pious robber immediately retired without spoil or damage. The discovery of this honourable behaviour recommended Jacob to pardon and trust; he led an army at first for his benefactor, at last for himself, subdued Persia, and threatened the residence of the Abbassides. On his march towards Bagdad, the conqueror was arrested by a fever. He gave audience in bed to the ambassador of the caliph; and beside him on a table were exposed a naked scymetar, a crust of brown bread, and a bunch of onions. "If I die," said he, "your master is delivered from his fears. If I live, *this* must determine between us. If I am vanquished, I can return without reluctance to the homely fare of my youth." From the height where he stood, the descent would not have been so soft or harmless: a timely death secured his own repose and that of the caliph, who paid with the most lavish concessions the retreat of his brother Amrou to the palaces of Shiraz and Ispahan. The Abbassides were too feeble to contend, too proud to forgive; they invited the powerful dynasty of the *Samanides*, who passed the Oxus with ten thousand horse, so poor, that their stirrups were of wood; so brave, that they vanquished the

C H A P.

LII.

The Soffa-
rides,

A. D.

872—902

The Sama-
nides,

A. D.

874—999

C H A P.
LII.

Soffarian army, eight times more numerous than their own. The captive Amrou was sent in chains, a grateful offering to the court of Bagdad; and as the victor was content with the inheritance of Tranfoxiana and Chorasan, the realms of Persia returned for a while to the allegiance of the caliphs. The provinces of Syria and Egypt were twice dismembered by their Turkish slaves, of the race of *Toulun* and *Ikshid*¹⁰⁷. These Barbarians, in religion and manners the countrymen of Mahomet, emerged from the bloody factions of the palace to a provincial command and an independent throne: their names became famous and formidable in their time; but the founders of these two potent dynasties confessed, either in words or actions, the vanity of ambition. The first on his death-bed implored the mercy of God to a sinner, ignorant of the limits of his own power: the second, in the midst of four hundred thousand soldiers and eight thousand slaves, concealed from every human eye the chamber where he attempted to sleep. Their sons were educated in the vices of kings; and both Egypt and Syria were recovered and possessed by the Abbassides during an interval of thirty years. In the decline of their empire, Mesopotamia, with the important cities of Mosul and Aleppo, was occupied by the Arabian princes of the tribe of *Hamadan*. The poets of their court could repeat without a blush, that nature had formed their countenances for beauty, their tongues for eloquence, and their hands for liberality and valour: but the genuine tale of the elevation

The Toulonides.

A. D.

938—905.

The Ikshidites,

A. D.

864—968.

The Hamadanites,

A. D.

892—1001.

and reign of the *Hamadanites*, exhibits a scene of treachery, murder, and parricide. At the same fatal period, the Persian kingdom was again usurped by the dynasty of the *Bowides*, by the sword of three brothers, who, under various names, were styled the support and columns of the state, and who, from the Caspian sea to the ocean, would suffer no tyrants but themselves. Under their reign, the language and genius of Persia revived, and the Arabs, three hundred and four years after the death of Mahomet, were deprived of the sceptre of the East.

C H A P.
LII.

The Bowides,
A. D.
933—1055.

Rahdi, the twentieth of the Abbassides, and the thirty-ninth of the successors of Mahomet, was the last who deserved the title of commander of the faithful¹⁰⁸: the last (says Abulfeda) who spoke to the people, or conversed with the learned: the last who, in the expence of his household, represented the wealth and magnificence of the ancient caliphs. After him, the lords of the Eastern world were reduced to the most abject misery, and exposed to the blows and insults of a servile condition. The revolt of the provinces circumscribed their dominions within the walls of Bagdad; but that capital still contained an innumerable multitude, vain of their past fortune, discontented with their present state, and oppressed by the demands of a treasury which had formerly been replenished by the spoil and tribute of nations. Their idleness was exercised by faction and controversy. Under the mask of piety, the rigid followers of Hanbal¹⁰⁹ invaded the pleasures of

Fallen state
of the caliphs
of Bagdad,
A. D. 936,
&c.

C H A P.

LII.

domestic life, burst into the houses of plebeians and princes, spilt the wine, broke the instruments, beat the musicians, and dishonoured, with infamous suspicions, the associates of every handsome youth. In each profession, which allowed room for two persons, the one was a votary, the other an antagonist, of Ali; and the Abbassides were awakened by the clamorous grief of the sectaries, who denied their title and cursed their progenitors. A turbulent people could only be repressed by a military force; but who could satisfy the avarice or assert the discipline of the mercenaries themselves? The African and the Turkish guards drew their swords against each other, and the chief commanders, the emirs at Omra^{no}, imprisoned or deposed their sovereigns, and violated the sanctuary of the mosch and haram. If the caliphs escaped to the camp or court of any neighbouring prince, their deliverance was a change of servitude, till they were prompted by despair to invite the Bowides, the sultans of Persia, who silenced the factions of Bagdad by their irresistible arms. The civil and military powers were assumed by Moezaldowlat, the second of the three brothers, and a stipend of sixty thousand pounds sterling was assigned by his generosity for the private expence of the commander of the faithful. But on the fortieth day, at the audience of the ambassadors of Chorasan, and in the presence of a trembling multitude, the caliph was dragged from his throne to a dungeon, by the command of the stranger, and the rude hands of his Dilemites.

His palace was pillaged, his eyes were put out, and the mean ambition of the Abbassides aspired to the vacant station of danger and disgrace. In the school of adversity, the luxurious caliphs resumed the grave and abstemious virtues of the primitive times. Despoiled of their armour and silken robes, they fasted, they prayed, they studied the Koran and the tradition of the Sonnites; they performed, with zeal and knowledge, the functions of their ecclesiastical character. The respect of nations still waited on the successors of the apostle, the oracles of the law and conscience of the faithful; and the weakness or division of their tyrants sometimes restored the Abbassides to the sovereignty of Bagdad. But their misfortunes had been embittered by the triumph of the Fatimites, the real or spurious progeny of Ali. Arising from the extremity of Africa, these successful rivals extinguished, in Egypt and Syria, both the spiritual and temporal authority of the Abbassides; and the monarch of the Nile insulted the humble pontiff on the banks of the Tigris.

In the declining age of the caliphs, in the century which elapsed after the war of Theophilus and Motassem, the hostile transactions of the two nations were confined to some inroads by sea and land, the fruits of their close vicinity and indelible hatred. But when the Eastern world was convulsed and broken, the Greeks were roused from their lethargy by the hopes of conquest and revenge. The Byzantine empire, since the accession of the Basilian race, had reposed in peace and dignity;

Enterprises
of the
Greeks,
A. D. 960.

C H A P. and they might encounter with their entire strength
 LII. the front of some petty emir, whose rear was
 assaulted and threatened by his national foes of
 the Mahometan faith. The lofty titles of the
 morning star, and the death of the Saracens¹¹¹,
 were applied in the public acclamations to Nice-
 phorus Phocas, a prince as renowned in the camp
 as he was unpopular in the city. In the subordinate
 station of great domestic, or general of the East,
 he reduced the island of Crete, and extirpated
 the nest of pirates who had so long defied, with
 impunity, the majesty of the empire¹¹². His
 military genius was displayed in the conduct and
 success of the enterprise, which had so often failed
 with loss and dishonour. The Saracens were
 confounded by the landing of his troops on safe
 and level bridges, which he cast from the vessels
 to the shore. Seven months were consumed in
 the siege of Candia; the despair of the native
 Cretans was stimulated by the frequent aid of
 their brethren of Africa and Spain; and, after the
 massy wall and double ditch had been stormed
 by the Greeks, an hopeless conflict was still
 maintained in the streets and houses of the city.
 The whole island was subdued in the capital,
 and a submissive people accepted, without resistance,
 the baptism of the conqueror¹¹³. Constantinople
 applauded the long-forgotten pomp of a triumph;
 but the Imperial diadem was the sole reward that
 could repay the services, or satisfy the ambition,
 of Nicephorus.

Reduction of
Crete.

The Eastern

After the death of the younger Romanus, the

fourth in lineal descent of the Basilian race, his widow Theophania successively married Nicephorus Phocas and his assassin John Zimisces, the two heroes of the age. They reigned as the guardians and colleagues of her infant sons, and the twelve years of their military command form the most splendid period of the Byzantine annals. The subjects and confederates, whom they led to war, appeared, at least in the eyes of an enemy, two hundred thousand strong; and of these about thirty thousand were armed with cuirasses¹¹⁴: a train of four thousand mules attended their march; and their evening camp was regularly fortified with an enclosure of iron spikes. A series of bloody and undecisive combats is nothing more than an anticipation of what would have been effected in a few years by the course of nature; but I shall briefly prosecute the conquests of the two emperors from the hills of Cappadocia to the desert of Bagdad. The sieges of Mopsuestia and Tarsus in Cilicia first exercised the skill and perseverance of their troops, on whom, at this moment, I shall not hesitate to bestow the name of Romans. In the double city of Mopsuestia, which is divided by the river Sarus, two hundred thousand Moslems were predestined to death or slavery¹¹⁵, a surprising degree of population, which must at least include the inhabitants of the dependent districts. They were surrounded and taken by assault; but Tarsus was reduced by the slow progress of famine; and no sooner had the Saracens yielded on honourable terms than they were

C H A P.

LII.

conquests of
Nicephorus
Phocas, and
John Zi-
misces,

A. D.

963—975.

Conquest of
Cilicia.

CHAP. mortified by the distant and unprofitable view of
 LII. the naval succours of Egypt. They were dismissed
 with a safe-conduct to the confines of Syria; a
 part of the old Christians had quietly lived under
 their dominion; and the vacant habitations were
 replenished by a new colony. But the mosch
 was converted into a stable; the pulpit was
 delivered to the flames; many rich crosses of gold
 and gems, the spoil of Asiatic churches, were
 made a grateful offering to the piety or avarice
 of the emperor; and he transported the gates of
 Mopsuestia and Tarsus, which were fixed in the
 wall of Constantinople, an eternal monument of
 his victory. After they had forced and secured
 the narrow passes of mount Amanus, the two
 Roman princes repeatedly carried their arms into
 the heart of Syria. Yet, instead of assaulting the
 walls of Antioch, the humanity or superstition of
 Nicephorus appeared to respect the ancient metro-
 polis of the East: he contented himself with drawing
 round the city a line of circumvallation; left a
 stationary army; and instructed his lieutenant to
 expect, without impatience, the return of spring.
 But in the depth of winter, in a dark and rainy
 night, an adventurous subaltern, with three
 hundred soldiers, approached the rampart, applied
 his scaling-ladders, occupied two adjacent towers,
 stood firm against the pressure of multitudes, and
 bravely maintained his post till he was relieved
 by the tardy, though effectual, support of his
 reluctant chief. The first tumult of slaughter and
 rapine subsided; the reign of Cæsar and of Christ

Invasion of
 Syria.

Recovery of
 Antioch.

was restored; and the efforts of an hundred thousand Saracens, of the armies of Syria and the fleets of Africa, were consumed without effect before the walls of Antioch. The royal city of Aleppo was subject to Seifeddowlat, of the dynasty of Hamadan, who clouded his past glory by the precipitate retreat which abandoned his kingdom and capital to the Roman invaders. In his stately palace that stood without the walls of Aleppo, they joyfully seized a well-furnished magazine of arms, a stable of fourteen hundred mules, and three hundred bags of silver and gold. But the walls of the city withstood the strokes of their battering-rams; and the besiegers pitched their tents on the neighbouring mountain of Jausfan. Their retreat exasperated the quarrel of the townsmen and mercenaries; the guard of the gates and ramparts was deserted; and, while they furiously charged each other in the market-place, they were surprised and destroyed by the sword of a common enemy. The male sex was exterminated by the sword; ten thousand youths were led into captivity; the weight of the precious spoil exceeded the strength and number of the beasts of burthen; the superfluous remainder was burnt; and, after a licentious possession of ten days, the Romans marched away from the naked and bleeding city. In their Syrian inroads they commanded the husbandmen to cultivate their lands, that they themselves, in the ensuing season, might reap the benefit: more than an hundred cities were reduced to obedience; and eighteen pulpits of

C H A P. the principal moschs were committed to the flames
 LII. to expiate the sacrilege of the disciples of Mahomet. The classic names of Hierapolis, Apamea, and Emesa, revive for a moment in the list of conquest: the emperor Zimisces encamped in the paradise of Damascus, and accepted the ransom of a submissive people; and the torrent was only stopped by the impregnable fortrefs of Tripoli, on the sea-coast of Phœnicia. Since the days of Heraclius, the Euphrates, below the passage of mount Taurus, had been impervious, and almost invisible, to the Greeks. The river yielded a free passage to the victorious Zimisces; and the historian may imitate the speed with which he overran the once famous cities of Samosata, Edessa, Martiropolis, Amida¹¹⁶, and Nisibis, the ancient limit of the empire in the neighbourhood of the Tigris. His ardour was quickened by the desire of grasping the virgin treasures of Ecbatana¹¹⁷. a well-known name, under which the Byzantine writer has concealed the capital of the Abbassides. The consternation of the fugitives had already diffused the terror of his name; but the fancied riches of Bagdad had already been dissipated by the avarice and prodigality of domestic tyrants. The prayers of the people, and the stern demands of the lieutenant of the Bowides, required the caliph to provide for the defence of the city. The helpless Mothi replied, that his arms, his revenues, and his provinces, had been torn from his hands, and that he was ready to abdicate a dignity which he was unable to support. The emir was inexorable;

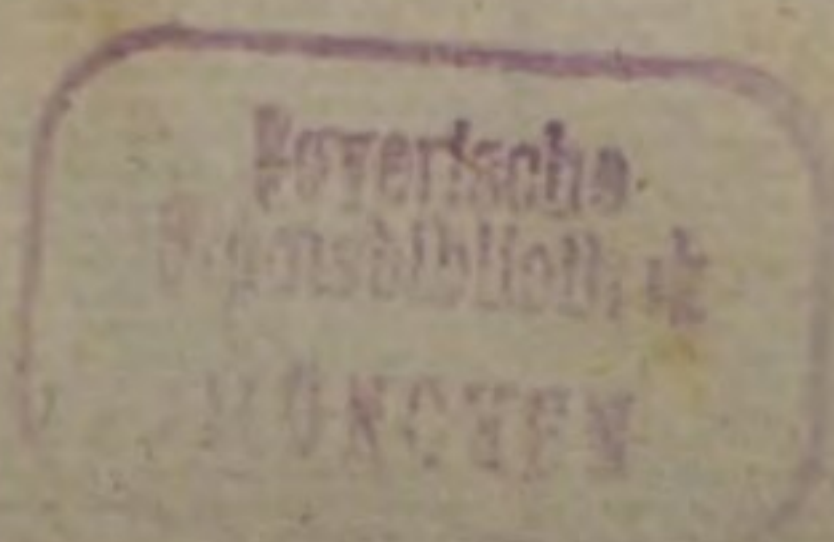
Passage of
the Euphra-
tes.

Danger of
Bagdad.

the furniture of the palace was sold; and the paltry price of forty thousand pieces of gold was instantly consumed in private luxury. But the apprehensions of Bagdad were relieved by the retreat of the Greeks: thirst and hunger guarded the desert of Mesopotamia; and the emperor, fatiated with glory, and laden with Oriental spoils, returned to Constantinople, and displayed, in his triumph, the silk, the aromatics, and three hundred myriads of gold and silver. Yet the powers of the East had been bent, not broken, by this transient hurricane. After the departure of the Greeks, the fugitive princes returned to their capitals; the subjects disclaimed their involuntary oaths of allegiance; the Moslems again purified their temples, and overturned the idols of the saints and martyrs; the Nestorians and Jacobites preferred a Saracen to an orthodox master; and the numbers and spirit of the Melchites were inadequate to the support of the church and state. Of these extensive conquests, Antioch, with the cities of Cilicia and the isle of Cyprus, was alone restored, a permanent and useful accession to the Roman empire¹¹⁸.

C H A P.
LII.

END OF THE NINTH VOLUME.



Gibbon, Edward,

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